



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

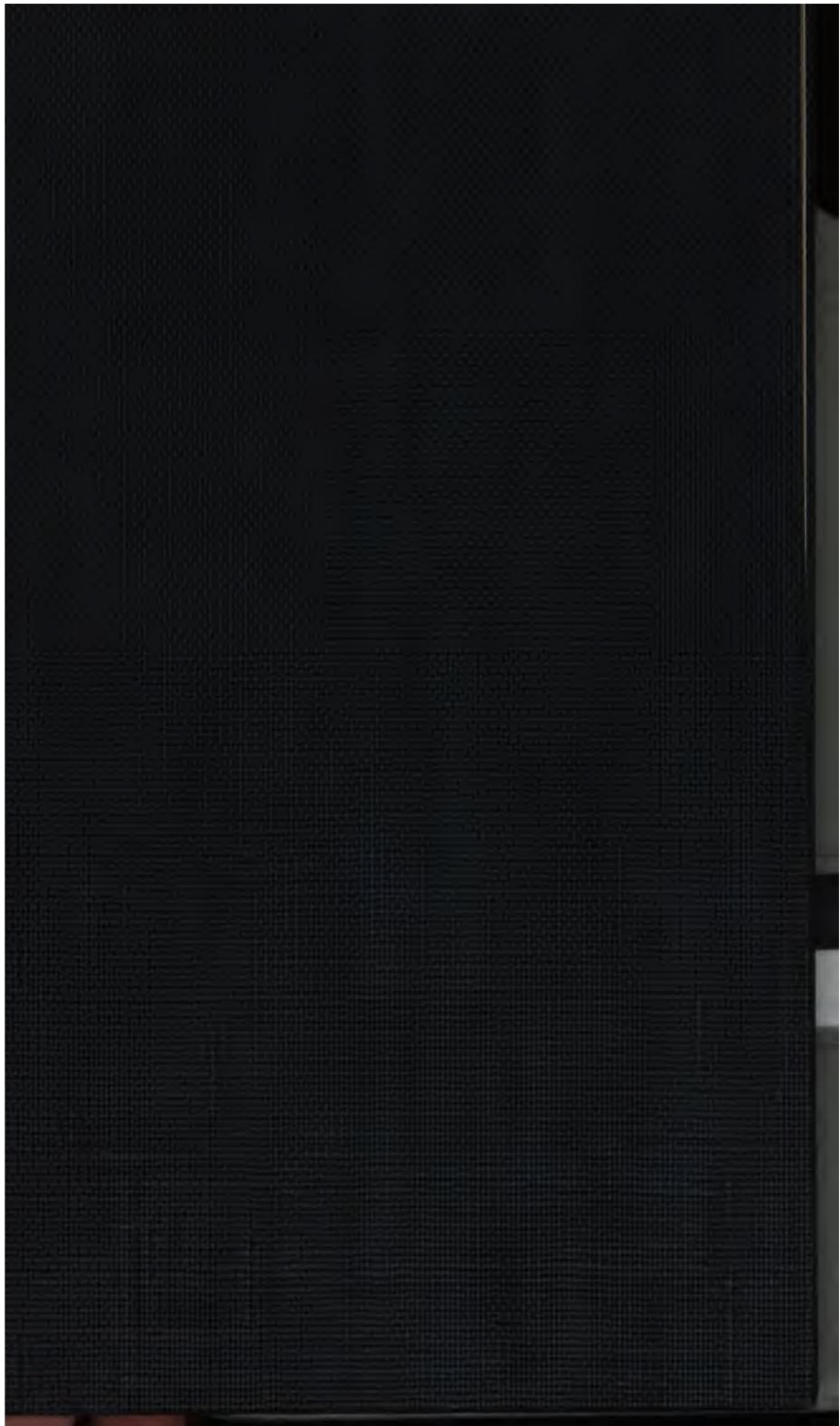
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL  
ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL  
LIBRARY



*From the collection*  
of the  
UNIVERSALIST HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY





# **L E T T E R S**

---

**TO**

**REV. B. STOW, R. H. NEALE, AND  
R. W. CUSHMAN,**

**ON**

## **MODERN REVIVALS.**

---

**By OTIS A. SKINNER.**

---

**BOSTON:  
ABEL TOMPKINS.  
1842.**

5 V  
3790  
. S6

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1842, by  
**ABEL TOMPKINS,**  
in the clerk's office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

## P R E F A C E .

---

THE following work was written from a deep sense of duty. The author was almost daily assailed, during the revival which called it forth, in a personal and exceedingly abusive manner. He was denounced as an enemy to God, and was repeatedly charged with preaching a doctrine which he knew to be false. His ministering brethren, and all liberal Christians, were assailed in the same spirit; and their opposition to the revival was called opposition to God. They were repeatedly denounced as infidels, and doomed to hell. They were addressed as though strangers to religion, and interrogated with regard to the number of their prayers, and called upon, in the most peremptory manner, to give up their views.

This violent and persevering opposition was endured, till endurance became a sin. The author, therefore, speaks in self-defence ; and, so far as he speaks for others, it is for their defence. He is a friend of revivals, but not of modern revivals. He believes in the influence

of the Spirit, but not in its supernatural influence. The day of miracles, he thinks, is passed ; and, therefore, he does not allow that, in conversion, there is any thing supernatural.

The Letters composing this work were addressed to Messrs. Stow, Neale, and Cushman, because they, it was understood, were chiefly instrumental in bringing Mr. Knapp to this city, and because they were the first to give countenance to his measures and his personal attacks upon liberal Christians.

The author has no ill feelings towards his assailants ; and, though they may have intended evil to the Universalist societies, he has the satisfaction of stating, that the excitement has added many to their number, and greatly to their zeal and firmness. He believes the same is true with regard to its effects upon the Unitarians.

The author has avoided, as much as possible, all personalities ; for it was his wish to give a general expose of modern revivals, and place revival religion in contrast with the beautiful religion of the Saviour.

*Boston, March 2, 1842.*

# LETTERS

TO

REV. B. STOW, R. H. NEALE, AND  
R. W. CUSHMAN.

---

## LETTER I.

**CONTENTS.** — New Measures — Messrs. Stow, Neale, and Cushman, uphold Mr. Knapp — Reason for writing — True view of a Revival — Description of a modern Revival — The general estimation in which Mr. Knapp is held by the Clergy of Boston — False Representations of Liberal Christians — Views of Dr. Sharp, Prof. Sears and Mr. Hague — Fears with which Mr. Knapp was introduced into Boston — Extract from the Christian Review.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,** — I have no apology to offer for addressing you in this public manner. By the course which you have recently pursued, you have openly avowed yourselves the devoted advocates of modern revivals. You have departed from the established customs of your denomination, and justified the introduction among you of measures which are entirely new, and which some of your most worthy and talented ministering brethren regard as highly injurious to the cause of Christ. You have approved a style of preaching which

is to the good citizens of Boston a great novelty, and which, for vulgarity, extravagance, misrepresentation, and severity, has never been surpassed in any age of fanaticism. You have held in your arms for weeks one who has rioted in the work of destruction, and whose labors have produced more cases of insanity, a greater amount of sectarian hatred and bitterness, and done more to drive the Christian spirit from the church, than any man who ever occupied a Boston pulpit. You, gentlemen, are accountable for what has been done. You introduced here this fanatical preacher. You sat in your pulpits and laughed at his sarcasm and ridicule, when the ravings of those he had maddened might have been heard from their wretched homes even to your churches, had it not been for the ravings to which you were there listening.

I believe, gentlemen, that you are naturally amiable in temper, and that you have heretofore been somewhat distinguished for the mild virtues of the gospel, and a warm sympathy with your fellow Christians of other sects. But a sad change has recently taken place in your feelings. You have been infatuated by a religious sorcerer. You have rejoiced in the labors of a man who has produced scenes of desolation that have made misanthropy itself weep. You said to him, *Go on, go on, deal out your abuse, ridicule your opposers, terrify the weak, excite the multitude*, when the fathers of our city were beseeching you, in the name of Heaven, to change your course, and allow your fellow-citi-

zens the privilege of enjoying unmolested their religious opinions. But you would not listen to their entreaties, and on you must fall the discredit, if not the evil, of this procedure.

But, gentlemen, I do not write so much for your benefit, as I do for the benefit of those you have deceived. That you are sick of the revival, I have no doubt; that you are ashamed of the part which has been acted, I have no doubt; and, could I believe that you would think it expedient to avow publicly your convictions, I would lay aside my pen, and spare myself the unpleasant task of exposing the measures and effects of your revival. Your brother Hague, of the Federal Street Church, acted the part of a high-minded Christian. Though at first he approved of the revival, he had the manliness to withdraw his support, and lift up his voice against it, when he became convinced that he had misjudged. For this he is to be commended; and he will reap his reward in the approval of a good conscience, and the permanent prosperity of religion among his people. We should never be unwilling to look back after having put our hand to the plough, if we find we have engaged in a bad cause. It is ever honorable to draw back *from* perdition.

Before proceeding to the expose which I am about to make, I wish to say a word to guard you against misapprehension. I am no enemy to revivals of religion. If I know my own heart, I can pray as fervently as any man,—“O Lord, revive thy work.” I am a believer in conversion, in the

new birth, and in experimental religion ; and I acknowledge that no man can be happy, till he is reconciled to God. My objection is not to a revival of the Christian religion ; for the more this is revived, the greater is the virtue of society, and the stronger the bond of union by which mankind are bound together. Religion is the great blessing of life ; the chief good of the world. I am therefore neither an enemy to religion nor revivals.

But, gentlemen, I am opposed, strongly opposed, to modern revivals. I am opposed to the measures by which they are got up, to the fears which they excite, to the spirit which they engender, to the strife which they cause, to the fire of fanaticism which they enkindle. They are not revivals of the Christian religion, for they do not make people love all men more ; neither do they make them more kind, just, and obliging. They are revivals of fears and doubts, of fanaticism and superstition, of sectarian hatred and prejudice, of a blind zeal, and a mad spirit of persecution. They are revivals of *much that is bad, and little that is good.*

In this opinion I am not alone. If I were, I might hold it with distrust, and have reason to suspect that I am the victim of an unfounded prejudice. But the views which I entertain are held by the most pious, learned, and talented clergymen of the world. The great body of the Christian church in Boston look upon your *stir* with the same disfavor that I do, and consider that an injury has been done, which a long life of usefulness will be wholly inadequate to repair.

Let me say, also, that my views are not confined to liberal Christians. They are the views of the Episcopalians, — a sect holding to what you term evangelical doctrines, and which, in biblical knowledge and enlightened piety, is by no means second to the one with which you are connected. The Calvinistic Congregationalist clergymen of Boston are all against your revival. They believe it to be the work of man, the result of measures which cannot be approved by honesty, decency, good sense, or true religion. They have not co-operated with you; they have not taken your leader by the hand; they have not invited him to their pulpits; they have not asked the blessing of God to attend his labors; but they have spoken against his measures in public and in private; they have denounced them as unchristian and pernicious, and they have lifted up their warning voice against his revival.

Thus, gentlemen, I stand with the many; you, with the few. My opposition to your revival has the sanction of pious and able men of all sects, while your course *perhaps* meets your own approval, and the approval of those you have excited. Say not I oppose your revival because my religious opinions are unsound; for the best men of your own sect denounce it as the production of fanaticism.

I know it has been said, again and again, that liberal Christians are the only ones who oppose your wild excitement. But, gentlemen, you know such is not the case; you know that that is a misrepre-

sentation! and yet, strange to tell, you permitted the falsehood to be uttered night after night, for weeks in succession! Can you hope, by such means, to make liberal Christians give up their views, and adopt your creed? What inconsistency! A poor method this, to proselyte those who can distinguish between cant and honesty, and who regard goodness as the only evidence of a Christian.

Gentlemen, not only did you know the general opposition to which we have referred, but you knew that Dr. Sharp and Professor Sears, and Mr. Hague, strongly opposed your revival, and that many of the most pious and intelligent of your respective churches, went with these men. You knew more. You knew the opposition there was to introducing Elder Knapp into this vicinity, and that you queried among yourselves whether the good would overbalance the evil. The mischief he would do stared you in the face, and made you doubt, and hesitate, and fear to go forward. With a trembling heart and a faltering step, you led him to your pulpits, after a few days of secret drilling, and said to him, faintly, *Fight your way.* He has done his work, and a sad work it is too! And now, because we will not approve it, and call it divine, we are denounced as enemies of God, and your mouthpiece assails us with his shameful abuse and scandal!

I understand now why your quarterly, the "Christian Review," spoke out as it did against the fanaticism of modern revivals. The writer no doubt was in the secret of the plan to com-

mence a revival campaign in Boston ; and, like a true sentinel, he spoke of the evils which would attend it.

I cannot close this letter more appropriately than in the language of the Review :

"In times of religious revival, a course is sometimes pursued, by well-meaning but mistaken men, which tends to produce excitement of the mere animal feelings, and to give these the ascendancy over the reflective part of our nature. And this excitement, carried to the utmost extent that it can reach, short of absolute insanity, is, by some, regarded as a mark of exalted piety and an indication of the special favor of Heaven. In accordance with these views, every influence which can act on the imagination or excite the passions, is brought into action to produce and sustain a state of feeling which is deemed so desirable. An excitement is created, based not on a deep and solemn interest in the realities of the eternal world, but on impressions made on the mind through the medium of the senses. This excitement being kept up for a length of time, and often increasing in intensity, the mind, at length, sinks beneath its power, and insanity, permanent or temporary, is the result. Cases of this kind have not unfrequently been regarded as true exhibitions of the influence of religion on the mind ; and hence the conclusion has been drawn, that the natural tendency of deep religious feeling is to lead to insanity. But, in fact, what has all this excitement to do with religion ? True, religion may be united

with it, but is it a part of religion? We answer, unhesitatingly, No. Excitement of the feelings, which belong to our animal nature, surely, is not the same with that devotion which is appropriate to our spiritual nature. Religion, it is true, is naturally connected with emotion, but not with that kind of emotion which may be as easily awakened by a novel or a tragedy as by 'the words of eternal life.' The conclusion unfavorable to religion, drawn from cases of this kind, rests on the mistaken ground of assuming two things to be alike, which are, in fact, essentially different."

I am, &c.

## LETTER II.

**CONTENTS.**—Revival on the Day of Pentecost—Followers of Montanus—French Prophets—Wesley the Originator of modern Revivals—Extracts from Wesley—Dr. Edwards's Revivals—Revivals not known till about A. D. 1740—Why are Revivals of such recent origin—Calvinism, Arminianism, and Millerism produce Revivals—The Opposition of the Orthodox to Revivals—The Fanaticism of Revivals—Revivals the work of Men.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,**—To hear you speak of modern revivals, those uninformed with regard to their origin would conclude that they can be traced back to the days of the apostles, and that they have been common in every age of the church. But this, as you know, is an entire misapprehension. Nothing like them can be found in the New Testament. Look at the records of the apostles' preaching in the book of Acts. The strongest case is the revival on the day of Pentecost. But what is there in that resembling your revival? The sermon of Peter was designed to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, that the Jews had wickedly crucified him, and that they should repent and receive the forgiveness of sin. This distinct and dispassionate argument, together with the miraculous gift of tongues, caused the conversion of three thousand.

The account of their conversion is thus given: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto

them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts ii. 41—47.)

Now here are no anxious seats; no calling of sinners forward for prayers; none to go about and coax, and threaten, and persuade the people. Neither do you see among the hearers any maniacs, any weeping with despair, any groaning in agony, any shrieking for mercy, any who beheld themselves hanging over the gulf of endless ruin, any filled with a blind spirit of denunciation. No, gentlemen, there is not the slightest resemblance between your revival and that on the day of Pentecost.

If we leave this case, and trace the history of the church onward towards the present time, we find nothing like your revival till the days of Wesley. He is the father of modern revivals. This is not, gentlemen, a hasty statement. I have weighed it, and am prepared to prove its correctness.

It is true, there were previously excitements bearing a resemblance to that which has been raging for some weeks in Boston. Look at the fanatical Montanists. These "sprung up in the year 171, and took their name from Montanus, who embraced Christianity in hopes of rising to the dignities of the church. He pretended to inspiration ; and gave out that the Holy Ghost had instructed him in several points which had not been revealed to the apostles. Priscilla and Maximilla, two enthusiastic women of Phrygia, presently became his disciples, and in a short time he had a great number of followers. The bishops of Asia, being assembled together, condemned his prophecies, and excommunicated those that dispensed them. Afterwards they wrote an account of what had passed to the Western churches, where the pretended prophecies of Montanus and his followers were likewise condemned."

We may refer also to "the French prophets, who first appeared in Dauphiny and Vivarais. In the year 1688, five or six hundred Protestants, of both sexes, gave themselves out to be prophets, and inspired of the Holy Ghost. They soon became so numerous that there were many thousands of them inspired. They were people of all ages and sexes, without distinction, though the greatest part of them were boys and girls from six or seven to twenty-five years of age. They had strange fits, which came upon them with tremblings and faintings as in a swoon, which made them stretch out their arms and legs, and stagger

several times before they dropped down. They struck themselves with their hands, they fell on their backs, shut their eyes, and heaved with their breasts. They remained a while in trances, and, coming out of them with twitchings, uttered all which came in their mouths. They said they saw the heavens open, the angels, paradise, and hell. Those who were just on the point of receiving the spirit of prophecy dropped down not only in the assemblies, crying out for mercy, but in the fields, and in their own houses."

Such is the authority for revivals, drawn from the history of the church. Honorable authority this! Just such as we should expect, to justify the fanaticism raging in our city. Now you, gentlemen, will call this all delusion and fanaticism; and yet we might with equal propriety call those convulsed and excited by the labors of modern revivalists deluded fanatics. Why, look one moment at the account Wesley gives of his preaching. On page 317, vol. i. of his Journal, he says:

"The attention of all was soon fixed on poor L—a S—, whom we all knew to be no dissembler. One so violently and variously torn of the evil one did I never see before. Sometimes she laughed till almost strangled; then broke out into cursing and blaspheming; then stamped and struggled with incredible strength, so that four or five could scarce hold her; then cried out, 'O eternity, eternity! O that I had no soul! O that I had never been born!' At last she faintly called on Christ to help her. And the violence of her pangs ceased."

"I did not mention one J——n H——n, a weaver, who was at Baldwin-street the night before. He was, I understood, a man of a regular life and conversation, one that constantly attended the public prayers and sacrament, and was zealous for the church, and against Dissenters of every denomination. Being informed that *people fell into strange fits at the societies*, he came to see and judge for himself. But he was less satisfied than before ; insomuch that he went about to his acquaintance, one after another, until one in the morning, and labored above measure to convince them 'it was a delusion of the devil.' We were going home, when one met us in the street, and informed us that J——n H——n was fallen raving mad. It seems he had set down to dinner, but had a mind first to end a sermon he had borrowed on 'Salvation by Faith.' In reading the last page, he changed color, fell off his chair, and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground. The neighbors were alarmed, and flock'd together to the house. Between one and two I came in, and found him on the floor, the room being full of people, whom his wife would have kept without ; but he cried aloud, 'No ; let them all come ; let all the world see the just judgment of God.' Two or three men were holding him as well as they could. He immediately fixed his eyes upon me, and, stretching out his hand, cried, 'Ay, this is he who I said was a deceiver of the people. But God has overtaken me. I said it was all a delusion. But this is no delu-

sion.' He then roared out, 'O thou devil ! thou cursed devil ! yea, thou legion of devils ! thou canst not stay. Christ will cast thee out. I know his work is begun. Tear me to pieces, if thou wilt ; but thou canst not hurt me.' He then beat himself against the ground again ; his breast heaving, at the same time, as in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face. We all took ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty." — P. 255.

These cases are a specimen of the effects which his preaching produced. His congregations often presented scenes of the wildest excitement imaginable. Now is it possible to believe that these effects were produced by the agency of the Spirit ? Will any reflecting man pretend that either God's Spirit, or the devil, *threw people into fits, made them fall to the earth, scream, and beat themselves terribly?*

While such scenes were being enacted in England under the preaching of Wesley, Dr. Edwards began his revival operations in America. In his popular work on revivals he thus speaks : " Extraordinary views of divine things, and religious affections, being frequently attended with very great effects on the body, nature often sinking under the weight of divine discoveries, the strength of the body taken away, so as to deprive of all ability to stand or speak ; sometimes the hands clinched, and the flesh cold, but senses still remaining ; animal nature often in a great emotion and agitation, and the soul very often, of late, so overcome with great admiration, and a kind of

omnipotent joy, as to cause the person (wholly unavoidably) to leap with all the might, with joy and mighty exultation of the soul ; the soul at the same time being so strongly drawn towards God and Christ in heaven, that it seemed to the person as though soul and body would, as it were of themselves, of necessity mount up, leave the earth and ascend thither.”—P. 108.

These revivals occurred about A. D. 1740.

Now, gentlemen, if we say they were produced by the special operation of the Spirit, how are we to solve the following difficulties ?

1. Why did they not occur before ? Why did Jehovah permit his religion to be preached for seventeen hundred years without rendering it efficacious by the agency of his Spirit ? Why not bless thus the labors of Melancthon, Zuinglius, Luther, and Calvin ? Do, gentlemen, give some answer to these queries.

2. How did it happen that rank Arminianism, as preached by Wesley, and rank Calvinism, as preached by Edwards, were attended with the same effects ? Both cannot be true. Wesley speaks of his dwelling much upon the perfect freedom of salvation for all men ; but that, Edwards regarded the worst of all errors. Now does the Holy Spirit make use of error in converting sinners ? If so, how can you say the preaching of liberal Christians will not be thus blessed ? Millerism, or the opinion that the world will end A. D. 1843, you regard as a fallacy unworthy of a refutation ; and yet that very fallacy is doing

more to convert people than Elder Knapp! I ask an explanation.

3. Why were not other congregations besides that of Dr. Edwards favored with revivals? Why did the Spirit confine itself to one place? Why did it not fall upon all the Orthodox churches?

4. Why were revivals, till within a few years, seldom known among the Orthodox churches? They have been as ready to condemn them as any Christians in the land. You can remember the "time when what are called revivals of religion were viewed by Calvinists generally as the offspring of fanaticism and ignorance, and the promoters of them as disturbers of the peace and disorganizers of society. If we only call to mind a few of the sermons of the Calvinistic ministers delivered in this neighborhood and throughout the Commonwealth only ten or fifteen years since, we shall many of us be forcibly reminded of the pointed opposition which they as a body manifested towards revivalists and their schemes. Then, the projectors of revivals were looked upon by the Calvinistic clergy, or vastly a majority of them, as illiterate, fanatical, and troublesome persons in society, persons whose labors tended strongly to sever some of the tenderest ligaments which bind families and parishes in the bonds of social harmony and Christian affection. Viewing this matter as they did,—the work of men of weak minds, little learning, and less decency of deportment, interlopers in society,—they acted consistently when they prayed and preached that the

plans of such might be defeated: this, if they were lovers of order, they could not well refrain from doing." Now will you inform me why the Holy Spirit should be poured upon these churches at the present day, and not in former days?

5. In many revivals the people shout and jump; in others, they lose their strength and fall down; in others, they jerk and go into fits; in others, they throw themselves upon the ground and roll about; in others, they see hell open, the devil after them, and God ready to cast them into the burning pit; and, in others, they merely feel a strong conviction of sin, and a happy relief when they "obtain a hope." Now, gentlemen, will you pretend that all this is the work of the Spirit? No; you will say nothing of the kind. You know perfectly well, that most of these movements and feelings are entirely the effect of fanaticism,—that they are a mere animal excitement. But how are you to draw the line? And where will you draw it? Here is your difficulty. The converts of Elder Knapp say, "O, we know that God has converted us—we never had such feelings before—we have experienced a marvellous change—we are sure that we have been miraculously converted." Just so said the Kentucky jerkers and Southern jumpers. They could not control themselves—God's Spirit was verily in them. Every knot of fanatics, from the French prophets down to the dupes of Elder Knapp, have said the same. Some have prophesied, and some have claimed the gift of tongues; some have shouted and jumped, and

others fallen into a swoon ; but *all have been moved by the Spirit!* And now, if you say any of it is the work of God, why not say all is? You cannot avoid saying this; your premises lead irresistibly to this conclusion.

Gentlemen, the truth is, God has no more to do with your revival than he had with the fanaticism of the French prophets. The subjects of the revival have been terrified and excited. They think that they are specially wrought upon by God's Spirit ; but many will soon find their mistake. They will soon see how they have been deceived ; and their last state will be vastly worse than their first.

I will only add, therefore, if you approve of modern revivals, you must approve of them just as they have occurred, and look upon *all* their noise, confusion, and wild excitement as the work of God. You have no right to say a part is the work of God, and a part the work of man ; for those you would denounce as fanatics are just as sure that God's Spirit is working within them as are the subjects of your revival. Do you tell me that the former are deceived? Granted. But, by the same rule which you can prove they are deceived, I can prove that the subjects of your revival are deceived. Gentlemen, be *consistent*, and call the *whole* the *work of man*.

I am, &c.

## LETTER III.

**CONTENTS.**—Machinery of Modern Revivals—Anxious Seats—Going forward for Prayers—Exhorters—Appeal to the New Testament—Relating Experiences—A little Boy chased by the Devil—Wonderful Conversion—Conversions of Liberal Christians—Glorification over Converts who pretend that they were Universalists or Unitarians—Manceuverings of Elder Knapp in regard to such Converts—False Statements of such—Efforts to give the Impression that Liberal Christians are forsaking their Churches in Crowds—Reported Conversion of the Author, and Mr. Streeter—Effects of such Misrepresentations—Revivals produced by Human Machinery.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,**—The machinery of modern revivals is a somewhat complicated affair; and to give a description of all its parts and movements, not a little difficult. It is necessary, however, that we should look at this machinery, and carefully consider its operation, that we may know what agency it had in producing your stir.

By machinery, I mean *anxious seats, going forward for prayers, rising to be prayed for, meetings to pray for Universalists and Unitarians, exhorting from house to house, whispering meetings, relating experiences, writing exhortatory letters to acquaintances and those known not to favor modern revivals, calling individuals by name in prayer, asking the audience to express its opinion by a vote, &c. &c.* Now I do not know that all this machinery has been employed in creating your excitement, though I believe the most of it has. Let us carefully survey it.

1. *The anxious seats.* These are designed for those "under concern." In what part of the New Testament do you read of them? On what occasions were they used by the Saviour or his apostles? At what meetings were they employed by Peter, Paul, John, or James?

Allow me to ask, also, what particular virtue there is in such a seat? Cannot the Holy Ghost visit the soul in one part of a church as well as another? Please answer this question. You say that the conversions which have taken place have been produced by the special outpouring of the Spirit. But if so, why must those under concern be placed upon an anxious seat? The truth is, gentlemen, it is not the Holy Spirit which produces the conversion, but the machinery employed. Hence the utility of the anxious seat. Those induced to occupy it, are made to imagine that some peculiar influence will there be felt. Not only so, occupying this is taking one step; it is publicly owning that they are anxious; it is taking a stand for the revival; it is openly expressing a desire to be a subject of it. Here, then, is the benefit of the anxious seat, and you see the great effect produced by it upon the ignorant, superstitious, and nervous.

2. *Going forward and rising for prayers.* Going forward! Is there not something ludicrous in this, when considered in connection with the idea that your converts are made by the special outpouring of the Spirit? Why go forward? Why rise? Cannot your prayers reach to any part of the house? Cannot the Holy Ghost find those

under concern, unless they rise up? These questions show that the effect produced is not by the Spirit, but *by going forward and rising up*. By doing these, those under concern take one step, just as when they go to the anxious seat.

Besides, there is the influence exerted upon others. When one goes forward, or rises up, or takes the anxious seat, its effect is felt through the whole audience, and much is done towards fastening the conviction upon the heart that God is indeed at work among the people. It makes but little difference who the persons are that go forward. They may be ignorant females, who know nothing of the Bible, young children, who could be frightened to join a church by a story about the old man in the cellar, or nervous men, who will spend one day upon their knees in prayer, and the next in drinking and carousing; still their awakening is ascribed to the Spirit, and God is said to be doing his great work! Now is not this farcical in the extreme?

3. *Exhorting from house to house.* During your revival, a special business has been done at this. Many have devoted a great proportion of their time to it. Liberal Christians have been beset night and day; they have been teased till further endurance became a sin. They have been grossly insulted in their own homes; they have been told things utterly false, in order that they might be induced to join in the revival crusade. Entire strangers have thrust themselves into families, and told women to go to the revival meetings at all

events, even if their husbands were unwilling ! Married daughters have been given to understand that, unless they would leave liberal meetings, they would incur the displeasure of their parents. Mothers have wept over their daughters and sons, and told them that, unless they would attend the revival meetings, God would certainly cast them off. Ladies have even been assaulted in the streets by utter strangers, and besought to attend the meetings ! The prayers which these exhorters have offered have been boisterous, and contained expressions highly insulting to those for whom they were offered.

Now, gentlemen, if revivals are the work of God, why all this effort ? Why this officious meddling ? Why this attempt to destroy the peace of families ? Why are falsehoods used to operate on the mind ? Cannot the Holy Ghost convert sinners without such measures ? Ah ! it is the exhorting, the teasing, and the misrepresentation that do the work — not God's Spirit.

I wish to ask your authority for this course ? "Will you pretend that this kind of visiting, and praying, and frightening was ever adopted by any inspired teacher ? Is not the whole process virtually condemned by the example and instructions of our Saviour and his apostles ? Did the heavenly Jesus ever distract the city of Jerusalem, and send his apostles to visit every individual and family ? Did he ever ask the members of a household for liberty to pray in their presence ; or ever proceed to offer up devotions against their consent ; or ever

denounce them as unconverted, in his addresses to his heavenly Father? Did he ever say to the fearful and distrusting that endless torments must be their portion, unless they repented within a given number of minutes? Did he ever conduct unkindly, or uncivilly, or impolitely, towards an individual or family? Did he send his apostles abroad to create terror, dismay, and excitement? Did he not charge them to say, Peace be within this dwelling, whenever they entered a house? On the other hand, did he not level most of his denunciations against the loud-professing, over-zealous, madly-proselyting Pharisees? Did he not censure them for their disfigured faces, their ostentatious prayers and alms-givings, their neglect of the weightier matters of the law, and their spiritual pride and self-righteousness? Did not the apostles severely reprove those who went creeping from house to house, to lead captive silly women? Did they not command those to be marked and avoided who caused divisions in families, neighborhoods, and societies? Did they not rank busybodies in other people's concerns among the most depraved and wicked?" — *Rev. B. Whitman.*

The other parts of your machinery are in perfect keeping with what we have described. They are all calculated to create an excitement, to alarm the fears, and affect the multitude. My limits will not permit me to go into an explanation of them all, and I must be content with remarks on one other point.

4. *Relating experiences.* No sooner is a person

a little affected, than he is forced up to speak, to tell what God is doing for him, what he has experienced, and to exhort sinners to flee from hell. Many, it is true, make bad work of it; but as this is a part of the process, they must speak. Males and females, old and young, must all bear their testimony. It matters not how great the multitude in attendance may be — the more the better, even if women are to relate their experiences!

Some of these experiences are curious affairs. One little boy, in relating his, said the devil was chasing him, and that he was continually haunted by him! Poor child. No wonder that, in the grief of his heart, he should beg Elder Knapp to save him. Some were very particular in describing their hostility to the revival, their determination to oppose it, and the dreadful hardness of their hearts. These were peculiarly delightful cases, and were held up by your leader, as signal victories of grace! They were rejoiced over, and made occasions of special thanksgiving! It seemed to be of no consequence who related such an experience; it would always call forth expressions of triumph!

The richest experiences, however, were those related by persons who had seen a Unitarian or a Universalist church. Then all ears were open, and, lest any should not understand what was said, your *good* elder would repeat the choice expressions which related to Unitarianism or Universalism. "You hear," he would say, "he has been a wicked Universalist! O what a dreadful doctrine!"

Not satisfied with what such persons would say about Universalism, and smooth preaching, and the devil's doctrine, and being lulled to sleep by men whom they never heard ten times, Mr. Knapp would ask leading questions, in order to set off liberal sentiments in the worst possible light!

Nor was this all. He would have a special glorification over such converts, and hold them up as wonderful instances of the great power of grace! If he could get a weak-minded girl, who had attended a liberal meeting, it was represented as a far greater victory, than to convert a gray-headed sinner, who had been for fifty years a regular member of a Baptist congregation! In the one instance, he had an exhibition of the dreadful fallacy of liberal sentiments, besides a display of grace; but, in the other, only a victory over sin. Thus he would make the irreligion of a girl at fifteen, who had been connected with a liberal congregation, the fruit of error in doctrine, while the irreligion of a Baptist was owing to the depravity of the heart, or the influence of the world!

But all this did not satisfy him. For fear a sufficient degree of opposition had not been excited against liberal sentiments, by answers to his crafty questions, and by expressions which he had forced from his converts, he filled the minds of his hearers with stories about the sins of liberal Christians, great conversions of Universalists and Unitarians, and what he had done in different places for the demolition of liberal religious societies.

All this manœuvring was not without its effect.

It gave many the impression that the ranks of liberal Christians were being rapidly thinned by his labors, that Universalist and Unitarian churches would soon be broken up, that the members of those churches were beginning to see the awful fallacies they had embraced, and to realize that those fallacies could not stand before the mighty movements of God's all-conquering Spirit. Deluded and excited by such false impressions, the converts and the anxious were ready to believe the most extravagant statements that could be made, and to admit the truth of any doctrine advanced. They could see and hear a thousand things palpable to none others. Hence the groundless stories about the conversion of Universalists and Unitarians. Why, gentlemen, according to the stories of these converts, I have been on Mr. Knapp's anxious benches, weeping in agony ; I have been converted to his charming religion, and my congregation almost dispersed ; the superintendent of my Sabbath school has been led to see the dreadful fallacy of Universalism, and the surpassing beauties and glories of endless misery ! Rev. Mr. Streeter, too, has been brought into the marvellous light of partialism, and Satan's kingdom almost demolished !! Thus have people been deceived by misrepresentation. This, however, was not the worst effect produced. Those of his converts who love human glory and applause had laid open before them a short road to celebrity ; for the highest honors were given to the ones who had been laboring the longest in the cause of error ! Hence, some gave out that

they had been zealous Universalists and Unitarians, when they never had attended a liberal meeting, and never contributed a farthing for the support of liberal sentiments. One man, wholly unknown to the Universalists, said he had advocated their doctrine for eight years! What a shouting it caused! "*A preacher! a preacher! a Universalist preacher!! has been converted!*" was the cry from one end of the city to the other, when the truth was, the man was neither a preacher nor a member of any Universalist congregation. However, he obtained his glorification! He became a big man.

Now I admit that all this had an influence. Many were made to believe that there was indeed a wonder-working power abroad in the city; that all men, women, and children were flocking to the elder's standard, and that there was verily something real in the conversions he was effecting. Having looked on, and seen the movement, I am compelled to make this acknowledgment. But I do not make it without a feeling of deep mortification that any persons, young or old, ignorant or learned, in this age of the world, should be thus duped. There is, however, one redeeming circumstance. The Universalists and Unitarians have stood their ground like firm Christians. Converts from their ranks have been few indeed; and those few say *they never believed what they professed!*

Here, gentlemen, allow me to ask, whether you will gravely pretend that your converts have been made by the Spirit of God, when such measures as these have been employed in your revival? Admit

that God's Spirit does attend, in a miraculous manner, the preaching of his truth, and the difficulty is only increased ; for you see here, not that truth was preached, but that false confessions were made, fanatical experiences related, and unholy misrepresentations given of the effects of the revival ; and that these produced the conversions. If they did not, why resort to them ? Why not carry on your revival without them ?

Thus I have briefly surveyed the operation of your revival machinery ; and a terrible engine it is, to the ignorant, weak-minded, and nervous. *To this machinery you owe your revival.* Gentlemen, you cannot refute this position. I say again, therefore, it was not God's Spirit which produced your revival, but Elder Knapp's machinery produced it. If not, why was the machinery employed ? Why not use the means ordained of God ? Why leave the Bible, and adopt the inventions of men, if your purpose could be obtained without them ?

I am, &c.

## LETTER IV.

**CONTENTS.**— Honesty — Priestcraft — Charges against the Author — Mr. Knapp's Cunning — His Artifices — His efforts to create Prejudices — He stated what was known to be false — Stories against Universalist Preachers — Stories about the Sacrament and a Deacon — C. H. Francisco — Mr. Knapp's account of him — Falsity of that account — Wickedness of Francisco — Certificate of his Wife's Father and of his Physician — Francisco's execution — Mr. Knapp's stir produced by false Stories — The Holy Spirit would not approve of such Measures — Fabrications about the Author and his People, and Universalist Clergymen — Rev. Mr. Balch — Origin of the Fabrications — Marvellousness — Extracts — Conclusion.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,** — In the preceding letter, I spoke of the machinery of your revival, and had occasion to refer to some of the misrepresentations by which it was aided. In this letter, I propose to consider, at length, the subject to which I then merely alluded. This is no very pleasant task, but duty demands that it should be performed, and I will not shrink.

I dislike much to raise a suspicion against the honesty of any man engaged in the ministry, or interested in the cause of religion ; for honesty is one of the first Christian virtues. Without it no man can be a Christian. Too many have forgotten this ; for, while they have been honest in relation to dollars and cents, they have privately confessed that they preach doctrines as undoubted truths, the correctness of which they seriously question, and have given their hearty approval of measures which they felt were of doubtful utility.

There is much of such craft in the world. Many things are said to produce effect, and many airs are assumed for the same purpose. The minister in the pulpit is too often a different man from the minister with certain friends. Such dishonesty has been one of the greatest curses of the church, and has done more to degrade the ministry in the eyes of the world, than all the opposition of infidels.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not accuse you of having played the priest in this manner, for I will assert nothing which I cannot prove. Neither do I say all the misrepresentations of Elder Knapp have been intentional.

For instance, he has publicly declared, again and again, that I do not believe what I preach, that I know my doctrine is false, and that I preach it to deceive the people. Possibly he may think so. He may be so ignorant of Universalism, and have dwelt so much on his one idea, as to imagine that I cannot believe what I profess. I think that I have seen persons sufficiently ignorant and narrow-minded to entertain such an opinion.

It is difficult, however, to be thus charitable towards the elder. He is a person of much cunning. He has studied well the weaknesses of mankind. He knows how to create a stir, excite the passions, and lead captive the unwary. He knows how to excite prejudices; and this attack upon my sincerity, and the sincerity of my ministering brethren, is one of his artifices to prejudice his followers against us, and, if possible, corrupt, in the same way, the minds of some of our hearers. And he has

succeeded, so far as his own followers are concerned ; for, according to all accounts, they look upon us with perfect hatred, and think we are devils incarnate !

I am not surprised : he has told them all this ; and he is a man of God, influenced by the Holy Ghost, and why should he not know ? But, gentlemen, have you contradicted these slanders ? When he stated that I had no faith in my doctrine, and knew it to be false, did you rise up and say, — “ Brother Knapp is mistaken ; Mr. Skinner we are persuaded is sincere ? ” With two of you I have a somewhat intimate acquaintance, and that acquaintance has been extremely pleasant to me. Personally, I have ever been treated by you with civility and kindness. Now it cannot be that you would have treated me thus, had you believed I was altogether insincere, and without any faith in my religion. Why then did you allow me to be slandered in your pulpits ? Why did you silently permit the grossest misrepresentations to be made night after night in your presence ?

Mr. Knapp has been equally abusive towards all liberal clergymen. He has uniformly classed them with Deists and Infidels. He has applied to them the most offensive terms which he could find, and represented them as the devil’s agents, and the devil’s preachers. His stories told respecting them have been in perfect keeping with the abuse to which we have alluded. - Look at the following, taken from a sermon as reported for one of our city papers :

"At the time the Universalists held a convention in Watertown, N. Y., two of the ministers boarded with a lady there, and she thought it proper to request them to ask a blessing. They started back! 'The devil!' said one of them."

"A man by the name of Jones was led to inquire why Universalists built meeting-houses and maintained preaching; so he put the question to a Universalist minister. The minister replied, that he preached Universalism to get a living; another reason was to show his talents; and a third reason was to make the doctrine popular. 'Well,' said the man, 'if this is what your preaching is for, I have got enough of it.'"

Now, gentlemen, do you believe these stories? Does your knowledge of Universalist clergymen justify any in believing them?

Not satisfied with heaping odium upon the preachers, Mr. Knapp assailed the people. Respecting them he thus speaks:

"Whenever there is a revival of religion, you will find Universalists would rather go off to the taverns and engage in drinking, than to engage in prayer."

"But I shall not look entirely to the cases of the mere lobby members, the hangers-on, the offscouring—but to the principal men. In Watertown, when they built the Universalist church, they undertook to administer the sacrament. It was observed that one of their principal men did not partake with them. He was asked the reason. He knew it was all a hoax. You will agree with him,

I think, when he said, 'it was carrying the joke a little too far.'"

"In Hamilton, N. Y., one Sunday, one of the deacons of the Universalist church met one of the deacons of the other churches, as they were going home from church. The sacrament had just been administered at the Universalist church. There was some trouble with the Universalist deacon's horse, and so he cursed and swore most shockingly. The other deacon remonstrated. 'Why,' said he, 'I am astonished, deacon, that on the Sabbath day, when you have just come from the communion table, that you should swear so.'"

Now, gentlemen, I believe these are downright falsehoods, manufactured for a revival campaign. Are not the Universalist churches of Boston thronged from Sabbath to Sabbath? Are not their conference meetings always well attended? But your pious elder says one man called the sacrament a hoax, and that a deacon swore! Did you ever know Baptist deacons to do wrong? O what a list of offenders among your deacons could I array before you, were I so disposed! but what would it prove?

The above stories are trifling compared with some related by Mr. Knapp. Perhaps none surpassed the one told of Cornelius H. Francisco. This, like the other stories of the elder, is told wherever he preaches. It runneth in this wise:

"That Francisco was a confirmed Universalist, of Utica, N. Y., and, getting tired of life, resolved on committing suicide, and going to heaven at

once — that, in order to let his minister, Rev. D. Skinner, see how triumphantly he could carry out his faith in death, by his own hand, he called on him to witness his suicidal exit — that, on seeing him determined on suicide, Mr. Skinner remonstrated, and told him, at last, that there *might be an eternal hell after all*, and he *might go to it*, if he persisted — that he then asked him why he had not preached so before, and in the pulpit, and that he replied, it would not do, for it would make people crazy — that then F. desisted, was struck under conviction, joined the Presbyterian church, and adorned his Christian profession by a well-ordered life and godly conversation."

Now, gentlemen, this is one of the basest misrepresentations ever fabricated. The story is false in all its essential particulars. Francisco never was a Universalist, and, in the interview which he had with Mr. Skinner, no such conversation ever took place. Neither did Francisco ever become a reformed man. I have documents in my possession, proving all this in the most conclusive manner. He was one of the vilest wretches that ever lived, and his conversion was all a mockery, for he was not a reformed man in any sense whatever. To be convinced of this, you have only to read the following certificate from the father of his first wife. The certificate alludes to statements made by Mr. D. Skinner and Mr. Grosh, in which they positively deny the assertions of Mr. Knapp.

"This may certify, that Cornelius H. Francisco married a daughter of mine for his first wife, and

was in my family much of the time for several years. I am well acquainted with him, and with all the circumstances related above by Mr. Skinner and Mr. Grosh. The statements of Messrs. S. and G. are correct, as far as they go; but the one half is not told. Mr. F. was a cruel and unfeeling husband, and abused his wife beyond endurance, insomuch that she was obliged to refuse living with him, and I to forbid him the liberty of my house. He was habitually guilty of drunkenness, adultery, visiting the filthiest brothels in this city, and almost every nameable vice; and that, too, *after he became a member of Dr. Lansing's church.* He was also guilty of *bigamy*, and I think of *polygamy*. He married a girl by the name of Riley, of Manlius, Onondaga county, some time before the death of my daughter; and also exultingly showed to two respectable gentlemen in this city a certificate from a justice of peace in Youngstown, Niagara county, certifying his marriage to another lady, belonging (I think) to Canada, some months before his marriage in Manlius.

"A short time before he united with the Presbyterian church of this city, he came to my house and urgently solicited my daughter to consent to live with him again. She reproved him for his vicious and debauched habits, and tenderly intreated him to abandon them, and strive to regain his lost character, promising, if he would, that she would live with him again. He laughed at the latter idea, and remarked, that, as to his *character*, he cared nothing about that, for he could reëstab-

lish that in a few days' time, whenever he pleased, by attending a protracted meeting and *joining the Presbyterian church*; — that he had once joined the *Methodists*, and could then pray, and talk, and exhort as well as any of them; and he could do it with the Presbyterians; and he rather thought he should take that method to reëstablish his character. Some time after he became a member of Dr. Lansing's church, he again came to my house and urged his plea to live with his wife, on the ground that he had *reformed*, and would live a virtuous life, if she would consent to live with him. She much doubted both the genuineness of his reformation and the sincerity of his professions, and for some time utterly refused. But at last, overcome by entreaty, and the most solemn promises on his part, she reluctantly consented. And thus, with the heart of a demon, he completed her martyrdom by remaining with her one or two days, and imparting to her his own loathsome disease, contracted at brothels, and then left her, exulting to his depraved companions that he had succeeded so well in his design. She buried her miseries and wretchedness deep in the recesses of her own heart, and remained silent, till medical aid was useless; her heart was broken, and the peaceful grave soon gave her a shelter and a resting-place, where 'the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.' I, last summer, saw the lady he married in Manlius, for his second or third wife, while his first was living. She deeply sympathized with me in my affliction. She had long

since learned his character and refused to live with him, saying she never desired to see his face again.

GEO. W. LADD.

"N. B. The above I am willing to make oath to,  
at any time. G. W. L."

To the above, I will add the following:

"This may certify, that I concur in the statement of Mr. Ladd, above expressed, and, as I attended Mrs. Francisco professionally, during her sickness, believe that her death was occasioned by the abuse and vices of her husband. Soon after his union with the Bleecker Street church, [Utica,] he called at my office, on his return from a tour to the west, and inquired after the health of his wife; and, when answered that her health was not good, he replied, 'If you will kill her off, I will pay you well for it;' and then exultingly showed a certificate of his recent marriage to a young lady, (as he stated, from Canada,) at Youngstown, Niagara county, N. Y., by a justice of peace, by the name of Ashbel G. Hinman. I. N. MEACHAM, M. D."

"*Utica, June 15, 1835.*"

The fate of this atrocious villain was such as might have been expected. He paid the forfeit of his last heinous crime, the murder of his fourth wife, by being executed on the gallows, in Erie, Pa., in the spring of 1833.

There, gentlemen, is Mr. Knapp's great convert from Universalism! Look at him. Was he not a saint? Did not grace do a great work in his marvellous regeneration?

But the question will arise, Did Mr. Knapp know the character and fate of Francisco? I reply,—I cannot answer. That he ought to have known, is certain; that he did know, is equally certain, if he is an honest and a candid man; for both honesty and candor would have led to a full inquiry in regard to his history. The facts in relation to the man were published years ago, and sent to Mr. Knapp. They were republished by our friends in the city of New York, when he was engaged in his revival operations there! How, then, can we resist the conclusion, that he knows the falsity of what he has stated?

Here, gentlemen, is a specimen of the vile abuse which Mr. Knapp heaped upon us, and of the falsehoods with which it was justified. Malice itself could not draw a darker picture of a people, than he drew of liberal Christians. They were all represented as hell-bound and hell-deserving! Their salvation was declared to be an utter impossibility. On this subject, he had no doubt. God himself could not have been more positive!

Now, that this abuse, backed up by vile stories and bold assertions, had its influence, you know. But do you not know, with equal certainty, that it was unmerited, and that, as a denomination, we were vilely slandered? What, then, shall we say of the converts produced by such means? Shall we say they were made by the agency of the Spirit? Would the Holy Ghost give efficacy to falsehood, and render it the power of God unto salvation? The thought is a libel upon God. Your

revival, therefore, was the work of Mr. Knapp, and not the work of the Lord.

The foregoing, though the worst, are not the only misrepresentations by which your revival was carried on. Misrepresentation was the order of the day. A lying spirit was abroad in the city. Not the least reliance could be placed upon the reports which were circulated against the liberal Christians. My people were told, again and again, that I had been upon the anxious bench, and that I wept there like a child. The story was circulated, that I was converted, and had come out a blazing revivalist. It was said that I had written letters to different persons, soliciting an interest in their prayers ; that I had been to Mr. Knapp, and apologized for opposing his revival ; that my congregation had been almost dispersed by the stir ; that I had confessed my secret belief in the eternity of misery ; that I did not pray in my family, &c. &c. The whole of this, gentlemen, was a fabrication. But by whom was it fabricated ? Surely not by my friends ; for they would not seek my injury. With whom, then, did these fabrications originate ?

Such fabrications are not peculiar to your revival, they are common to all. During the short period of my ministry, I have been converted, according to report, about ten times ! The story of my conversion has been told in various revival meetings, in different parts of the country ; and, for aught I know, many have been converted by it !

Similar fabrications have been circulated about

almost every Universalist clergyman with which I am acquainted ! Messrs. Ballou, Streeter, Whittemore, Cobb, and Chapin have in numerous cases been converted, and great glorifications have been had in consequence thereof.

One of these fabrications was recently circulated in Providence. Rev. Mr. Balch, now of New York, but recently of P., was said to have renounced Universalism ; the news spread as on the very wings of light ; it was a choice matter for the revivalists, and they discoursed upon it, and rejoiced over it, with great joy ! The Universalists were taunted with it at every corner of the streets, and, when passing along in the city, they were hailed by partialists from their windows, and crowded over. A letter was despatched to Fall River, and read in a revival meeting, and scenes like those we have just described were witnessed there. So great was the effect in Providence, that our friends sent for Mr. Balch to come and refute the slander !

Now, gentlemen, this is a serious business, and I cannot look at it without a deep feeling of melancholy. Have you many among you like the lady who said, in relation to these stories,—*What if they are lies ? they are told for the good of the church !*

You will say, perhaps, that such stories originate innocently, or are started by the mischievous, for the purpose of a little merriment. That would do were the cases not so frequent ; but when they crowd upon us by scores in a week, your solution is wholly unsatisfactory.

One thing is admitted,—all revivalists have an eye and an ear for the marvellous. A love of the marvellous is incorporated into their souls in the process of their conversion. All revival preaching is of the marvellous character. The same is true of the praying and exhorting, of revival stories and experiences. In every revival meeting, you will hear a great deal about marvellous conversions, marvellous preachers, marvellous dreams, marvellous discoveries, marvellous conflicts, and marvellous deaths.

I will give you a specimen. Mr. Wesley says,— “Friday 9, I was a little surprised at some who were buffeted of Satan in an unusual manner, by such a spirit of laughter as they could in no wise resist, though it was pain and grief unto them. I could scarce have believed the account they gave me, had I not known the same thing ten or eleven years ago. Part of Sunday my brother and I then used to spend in walking in the meadows and singing psalms. But one day, just as we were beginning to sing, he burst out into a loud laughter. I asked him if he was distracted, and began to be very angry, and presently after to laugh as loud as he. Nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces; but we were forced to go home without singing another line.” (Vol. i. p. 317.)

Again, he says, “Forty or fifty of those who were seeking salvation desired leave to spend the night together, at the Society-Room, in prayer and giving thanks. Before ten I left them, and lay

down. But I could have no quiet rest, being quite uneasy in my sleep, as I found others were too, that were asleep in other parts of the house. Between two and three in the morning I was awaked, and desired to come down stairs. I immediately heard such a confused noise, as if a number of men were all putting to the sword. It increased when I came into the room and began to pray. One whom I particularly observed to be roaring aloud for pain was J—— W——, who had been always till then very sure that 'none cried out but hypocrites.' So had Mrs. S——ms also. But she too now cried to God with a loud and bitter cry. It was not long before God heard from his holy place. He spake, and all our souls were comforted. He bruised Satan under our feet, and sorrow and sighing fled away." (Vol. i. p. 326.)

That Mr. Wesley was honest in the views here advanced, I have no doubt ; but it is quite another matter to believe he was correct. I am willing to concede as much in relation to revivalists in general. I presume they sincerely believe all they say, about conflicts with the devil, and the workings of the Spirit. Believing in such manifestations and operations, they are constantly, in times of excitement, looking for some great display of grace. Living in such expectation, they are always prepared to give full credit to the wildest rumor ever circulated. But, after making all this allowance, I find nothing by which to account for the origin of the fabrications alluded to. How can honest people be constantly falling into such mis-

takes? Why do not liberal Christians circulate such fabrications respecting partialists? Why do we never, in our meetings, seek to excite an interest in our favor, by reporting the conversion of this or that man?

Such are the fabrications of revivalists, and such the probability that they were conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity; and by these, gentlemen, revivals are got up, and carried on! More than one half the stir you had was produced by fabrications that were utterly groundless! And yet you pretend that the stir was the work of God!! I am amazed! I can hardly conceive that you should be serious in such a pretence. Revivals the work of God, and yet the principal means by which they are got up are fabrications!! Verily this is an age of wonders!

I will close what I have to say in this letter by an extract from Dr. Sprague's Sermon, on "The general means of producing and promoting revivals."

"Another characteristic of the means which God approves for carrying forward a revival, and closely connected with the preceding, is *honesty*; by which I mean the opposite of all worldly artifice.

"It is true, indeed, that mere sincerity does not constitute religion; because a man may be very sincere in that which is very wrong; nevertheless, there is no religion without sincerity; and, while the gospel abounds in direct exhortations to cultivate it, the general tendency of the gospel is to form a perfectly honest character. Now, in ac-

cordance with this general feature of Christianity, every measure, which is adopted for bringing sinners to repentance, ought to be marked by entire Christian sincerity. The maxim, that the end justifies the means, has sometimes been adopted in this department of Christian duty; and there is reason to fear that ministers, and good ministers too, have acted under its influence; and, instead of preaching God's truth in all its length and breadth, have selected some particular parts of it to the exclusion of others, thus separating things which God hath joined together; and, instead of preaching God's truth just as it is, they have made high-wrought and over-strained statements, which the Bible does not authorize; and this they have done from a conviction that such statements are best adapted to produce powerful impression, as if the word of God would be tame and powerless if it should come forth in its native simplicity. I confess I know not how to characterize this in juster terms, than that it is 'handling God's word deceitfully.' It were presumption in any one to suppose that God has revealed any thing which is not profitable, or that he has omitted any thing which is important. What God requires his ministers to do, is not to frame any thing new, or even to correct or revise his own word, but to dispense it just as they receive it at his hands; and, if they do this, he will take care for consequences. But if they adopt any different course, they may fairly expect that, in some way or other, the divine displeasure will be visited upon their presumption.

"And what is true of the preaching of the word, is equally true of all other means for carrying forward a revival: they must all be characterized by Christian honesty,—honesty as well towards God, in whose service they are professedly employed, as towards the immortal souls whose salvation they are designed to effect."

I am, &c.

## LETTER V.

**CONTENTS.**— Contradictory Views of Revivalists — Calvinism — Methodism — Christianity — Elder Knapp dooming Dr. Channing to Hell — Extract from Burchard on Christianity — If Christians are Infidels, how do they get up their Revivals — Extract from Burchard on Calvinism — If Methodists are not Christians, how do they produce Revivals — Baptist Creed — Wesley against Calvinism — If Calvinism is wrong, how do Calvinists create their Stirs — Revivalists condemn each other — Three Revivals, under the charge of Messrs. Kirk, Maffit, and Himes — The conversion of three Sisters to as many Creeds — The Convert is like his Priest in Spirit and Character.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,**— Revivals are common among the following sects, — Calvinistic Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, and Christians. In the doctrines of these sects, there is an essential difference. The Congregationalists and Baptists are believers in Calvinism ; the Methodists in Arminianism, and the Christians in the Divine Unity, as held by Unitarians. In their preaching the distinctive features of the doctrines they hold are manifest. Having never heard you all preach, I cannot speak with regard to the doctrines of your discourses, though I suppose you preach according to your confession of faith ; and in this I find the doctrine of election and reprobation.

If, then, your system of faith is right, Methodism is wrong ; for that teaches that no man is elected or reprobated, but that Christ died for all, and that salvation is perfectly free for all, and that all may be saved if they will.

With the Methodists, however, you agree in saying, that Christ is God, and that he died as a substitute for sinners; and thus, you unite with them in opposition to the Christians who reject the doctrines of the Trinity and vicarious atonement.

Notwithstanding these great differences in doctrine, you are all equally successful in producing stirs, and frightening people into the church; at least, you all have stirs.

Here I must ask your aid. Elder Knapp has declared repeatedly, in this city, that no man is a Christian who denies the supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ. He has represented all who entertain such an opinion as on the road to hell! I have no time to contrast his character with such men as Channing, Barrett, and Gannett, and show how infinitely they are above him in all the virtues that constitute the Christian. Neither have I time to expose the presumption and effrontery of a man who would doom to an endless hell such men as those to which I have referred. Look at the idea a moment coolly. Elder Knapp doomed Dr. Channing to hell! and you, gentlemen, sat and heard it, and looked serious! What a farce! You know that you would a thousand times prefer the chance of Dr. Channing to that of Elder Knapp!

But to the difficulty. According to your leader and expounder, our Christian brethren are all down-right infidels, and bound to hell! Burchard talked in the same style about them. In a discourse at Woodstock, Vt., he said:

"The CHRISTIAN doctrine is the most deceptive

that ever came from hell. And, if Christ *is n't* the very God, those who depend upon him for salvation depend upon a rope of sand, which will precipitate them into eternal hell. The angel Gabriel has as much as he can *possibly* do to sustain himself in heaven, and so has Jesus Christ, if he *is n't* the true God himself. He can barely maintain his own standing, without saving one soul from hell. If Jesus Christ is not God Almighty, the Bible is a tissue of lies from Genesis to Revelation ; a most abominable imposition. The Unitarians, Christians, Socinians, Restorationists, Universalists, and Campbellites have brought in a damnable heresy, and will all go to hell, where they ought to be. If Christ is n't God, Mahomet was a prince on his throne, compared with him, and Trinitarians will go to hell. They are all idolaters ; and you all admit that idolaters ought to be damned. David, Jeremiah, St. Paul, Latimer, Cranmer, *Fenelon, Masillon*, [Roman Catholics !] Calvin, Whitefield, Wesley, Edwards, Tennent, and millions of others, are now in hell. They ought to be there to all eternity, if Jesus Christ is n't God Almighty.

" The errorists will be asked, when they get to heaven, if they believe in the Deity of Christ, and will answer, ' No.' Then depart into everlasting fire, &c. But the Orthodox will be asked the same question, and they will reply, We are rotten from head to foot, but believe in the Deity of Christ ; and without further ceremony, they will be told to enter into the joy of their Lord. I never knew a person to give evidence of salvation,

who did not believe that Christ is very God. Those who deny this have no genuine revivals. I would as soon expect a revival in hell as among them. They make *proselytes* to their false doctrine ; but make *converts* for hell.

" If a Unitarian minister tells me he has made *three hundred* converts in the course of his ministry, I reply, he has made just that number of converts for eternal hell, to curse God and their minister to all eternity. A preacher who denies the deity of Christ, therefore, is a most horrid murderer. He is *worse* than a murderer, and I will prove it. Hark ! look here,—suppose a Spaniard is walking along with an Orthodox Christian ; he draws his dagger, stabs him to the heart, and he goes right to heaven. Well, he is a murderer. But a Unitarian minister, who is a very learned and moral man, comes to a Trinitarian Christian, and by art and persuasion makes him disbelieve in the deity of Christ. The man lives a Christian life, to all appearance, dies, and goes to eternal damnation, believing that lie. Now, is n't this preacher infinitely worse than the murderer ? Do n't ye see ? I repeat, then, that every minister who denies the Trinity is worse, infinitely worse, than a murderer.

" But you will think, perhaps, that I am uncharitable, for they are sincere. Yes ; but are things true, because people sincerely believe them ? Then you may steal, rob, murder, because you are sincere, and go to heaven, ha ! Look here,—tell me, Henry, how many two and two make. He

answers, "It makes seven ;" and he is *sincere*. But does that make it right? We know the Unitarians, Christians, Universalists, &c. are sincere, and they will be sincerely damned, too, for giving God the lie. All churches that deny the deity of Christ are churches of the devil. The devil hates that doctrine worse than all things else, and so do they. The doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all true religion. A person who is really converted is full of the deity of Christ—eternal damnation—and the Holy Spirit. He glories in these doctrines. Men may be sincere in hell as well as heaven ; and I would no more pray for the salvation of a sincere Universalist than I would for a damned spirit in hell."—*Mirror of Fanaticism*, pp. 159—162.

There, gentlemen, that is exactly in the Knapp style. Our Christian brethren, then, are infidels ; and yet they can get up as good a revival as Elder Knapp at any time. Some of the greatest revivals ever known have been among that sect. What produced them? God's Spirit? O no, God's Spirit would not crown the labors of infidels with success. Their revivals therefore are the work of men. But are not the subjects of them just as sure that their conversion is the work of the Spirit as are the subjects of your revival?

Let us leave the Christians, and pass to a consideration of the Methodists. What say Orthodox revivalists in regard to them? Hear Burchard : he says :

"I have come to teach transgressors, who de-

serve to go to hell, the way of salvation. Hark ! look here,— I preach salvation from hell according to the eternal purpose and decree of Almighty God. I tell you, sinners of Woodstock, that, unless you are saved from eternal hell according to God's eternal counsel and purpose, as declared right here, in the 3d chapter of Ephesians, you will be damned eternally. Some preachers are afraid to preach the plan of salvation, as the Scriptures declare it. They darsn't say to transgressors, you *will go to hell and be damned eternally*, unless God has *elected* you to eternal life, and *decreed* your salvation according to his unalterable purpose. They are afraid of offending some of the church that can't bear this doctrine, or some of the congregation that don't like such *harsh* preaching. So they *fritter*, and *fritter*, and *fritter* away the doctrine of election, and decrees, and endless damnation, till it is good for just nothing at all. They are afraid to say, sinner, you will go to hell and be damned forever, unless God Almighty elected you to eternal life, before the world was made, the planets moved, or the sun shone in the firmament. They want to please every body,— so they speak smooth things, and spend a whole week in writing one or two discourses, which they deliver on the Sabbath, in such a genteel way that nobody is offended. The hearers say, what a *mild preacher* we have got here ! how pleasantly he speaks ! He do n't preach about decrees, and purposes, and eternal damnation. He is a fine man ; *come, let us go over to the tavern and take something to drink.* Ha ! that's

the way then, is it, to teach transgressors? *This way to lead them to hell!!* Never was a sinner truly converted to God by such miserable stuff. I have no allusion to the preaching here, nor to any person now present. But I tell you that I an't afraid to preach *Calvinism*. Thank God, I am a *Calvinist*, and an't ashamed to own it. God Almighty knows that, if the doctrine of *election* is n't true, I shall be damned as sure as there is an eternal hell for sinners! All my *hope* is in this glorious doctrine, connected with *effectual calling*, and the *final salvation* of *all* God's *elect*. I was as abominable a rebel against the law of God, till I was *four* and *twenty* years old, as ever trod the earth, — rushing headlong to eternal perdition! What could have saved *me* then, short of the *election*, *purpose*, and *decree* of God? Look here, you hell-deserving sinner! what can save *you*, if the doctrine of *election* is n't true, as declared right here, sir, in the *ninth* chapter of Romans: 'God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy;' that is, on all his elect people, and the rest he will send to hell. If I did n't believe this, I would shut this Bible and go right down out of this desk. But I do believe it — I glory in it — and, if I had it in my power, I would write it on every object in creation, and *hang it up on a fixed star*. Though I am but a feeble piece of clay, yet I am called of God, and wedged in under the altar, that I may cry to Almighty God to save his *elect*, by causing the light of his eternal purposes to shine upon them and start them up, that they may be saved from hell." — *Mirror of Fanaticism*, pp. 75—78.

Here the Methodists are swept from the list of saints, and Calvinism is held up as *the gospel*. This is too bad ; for Methodists originated revivals. Not only did they originate them, but for many years, were these people denounced as fanatics, by the Orthodox, for getting up revivals. I suppose, however, you will acknowledge that Burchard is correct, for your creed is Calvinistic. But if you do, how will you account for their revivals ? Will you say they are the work of man ?

It is now time to let the Methodists speak.. Do they allow that Calvinism is the truth ? Hear what Wesley says in relation to that doctrine, as set forth in your confession ;— I say, as set forth there ; because it is expressed cautiously, and evidently with a design to keep out of sight the odious doctrine of reprobation. Mr. Wesley says :

“ But methinks I hear one say, ‘ This is not the predestination which I hold. I hold only the election of grace. What I believe is no more than this, that God, before the foundation of the world, did elect a certain number of men to be justified, sanctified, and glorified. Now all these will be saved, and none else ; for the rest of mankind God leaves to themselves. So they follow the imaginations of their own hearts, which are only evil continually, and waxing worse and worse, are, at length, justly punished with everlasting destruction.’ ”

“ Is this all the predestination which you hold ? Consider. Perhaps this is not all. Do you not believe ‘ God ordained them to this very thing ? ’ ”

If so, you believe the whole decree ; you hold predestination in the full sense, which has been above described. But, it may be, you think you do not. Do not you, then, believe that God hardens the hearts of them that perish ? Do not you believe He (literally) hardened Pharaoh's heart, and that for this end he raised him up (or created him ?) Why, this amounts to just the same thing. If you believe Pharaoh, or any other man upon earth, was created for this end, to be damned, you hold all that has been said of predestination. And there is no need you should add, that God seconds his decree, which is supposed unchangeable and irresistible, by hardening the hearts of those vessels of wrath whom that decree had before fitted for destruction.

" Well ; but it may be you do not believe even this. You do not hold any decree of reprobation. You do not think God decrees any man to be damned, nor hardens, nor irresistibly fits him for damnation. You only say, 'God eternally decreed that, all being dead in sin, he would say to some of the dry bones, **LIVE**, and to others he would not. That, consequently, these should be made alive, and those abide in death ; these should glorify God by their salvation, and those by their destruction.'

" Is not this what you mean by *the election of grace* ? If it be, I would ask one or two questions : Are any who are not thus elected saved ? or were any from the foundation of the world ? Is it possible any man should be saved, unless he

be thus elected? If you say *No*, you are but where you were. You are not got one hair's breadth farther. You still believe that, in consequence of an unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, the greater part of mankind abide in death, without any possibility of redemption; inasmuch as none can save them but God; and he will not save them. You believe he hath absolutely decreed not to save them; and what is this but decreeing to damn them? It is, in effect, neither more nor less: it comes to the same thing. For, if you are dead, and altogether unable to make yourself alive, then, if God has absolutely decreed he will make only others alive, and not you, he hath absolutely decreed your everlasting death; you are absolutely consigned to damnation. So, then, though you use softer words than some, you mean the self-same thing. And God's decree concerning the election of grace, according to your own account of it, amounts to neither more nor less than what others call 'God's decree of reprobation?'

"Call it, therefore, by whatever name you please,—'election, preterition, predestination, or reprobation,'—it comes, in the end, to the same thing. The sense of all is plainly this: 'By virtue of an eternal, unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, one part of mankind are infallibly saved, and the rest infallibly damned; it being impossible that any of the former should be damned, or that any of the latter should be saved.'

"But if this be so, then all preaching is vain. It is needless to them that are elected. For they, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly

be saved. Therefore the end of preaching, ‘to save souls,’ is void with regard to them. And it is useless to them that are not elected, for they cannot possibly be saved. They, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly be damned. The end of preaching is, therefore, void with regard to them likewise ; so that, in either case, our preaching is vain, as your hearing is also vain.

“ This, then, is a plain proof that the doctrine of predestination is not a doctrine of God, because it makes void the ordinance of God : and God is not divided against himself.” — *Wesley's Works*, vol. vi. pp. 116, 117.

Thus you are cut off, or, at least, represented as holding to doctrines which have no authority from the Bible. How, then, do you get up revivals? Does the Holy Ghost make use of your errors in the work of conversion? Or do you, in revivals, preach Arminianism?

What a delightful state of things! Here are three systems of doctrines, and all are proved false; and that, too, when each system is effectual in producing revivals! Do you wish for any further proof that modern revivals are the work of men?

Suppose a case: suppose there are three revivals in progress at one time, in Boston. One is under the charge of Dr. Kirk, one under the charge of Professor Maffit, and the other under the charge of Elder Himes. Three nervous sisters attend the revival meetings, but they go to different ones. At length the three are converted, and become church members. One is an Orthodox, the other a Methodist, and the other a Christian. All say they are

right, and received their doctrine direct from God! All are miraculously converted, yet converted to different faiths! Now, gentlemen, we must say, first, that the Holy Ghost teaches damnable heresies; or, second, that these females are deceived, and that what they imagine is the work of God, is really the work of man.

Let me ask you to follow out this idea. The converts of Elder Knapp all see the dreadful fallacy of Universalism and Unitarianism; the Holy Ghost, they say, exhibits these heresies in their true character. How, then, does it happen, that the converts of Elder Himes are, so far as the Trinity is concerned, Unitarians? Why did the Holy Ghost teach them a destructive heresy?

The truth is, the people are converted to the doctrine which they hear during the revival. If the operator rails violently against Universalism, the convert imbibes his spirit, and adopts his views. If the opposition is to Unitarianism, Christianity, Catholicism, the effect is of a corresponding character. I have known converts to hate the Baptists, and ascribe their hatred to God's Spirit, just as Elder Knapp's converts hate the Unitarians and Universalists.

The subjects of the revival, therefore, are merely the clay in the hands of the minister, who fashions them after his own image. This conclusion is unavoidable, and shows that God has no special agency in the work.

I am, &c.

## LETTER VI.

**CONTENTS.**—The preaching of Christ and the Apostles—Their Denunciations—Preaching of Revivalists—Constantly dwell upon Hell—They preach a literal Fire in Hell—Roasting in Hell—Quotation from Ambrose—Intensity of Hell Torments—Mr. Knapp's Dream—Story of Ambrose—The Vindictive Spirit with which Denunciations are dealt out—Duration of Hell—Quotation from Edwards on this—No authority for such preaching—Sinners described as hanging over Hell—Time Short—Death at the Door—Revival Preaching Terrific—Elder Knapp and God's Love—Dr. A. Clarke's desription of a Preacher and the Gospel Supposition in regard to Mr. Miller—People frightened by the falling of the Stars—Revivals produced by fear.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,—** Christ and the apostles never labored to produce those morbid excitements which are the great aim of revival preaching. This will be evident by considering their descriptions of God and his punishments.

In his sermon on the mount, the Saviour gives his first description of the divine character; but, instead of painting him as a tyrant, burning with vindictive wrath and cruelty, hardly restraining his vengeance from breaking in an endless storm upon the world, he summons to his aid all that is rich and beautiful and sublime in nature, to represent that love which encircles in its arms the whole family of man, and that grace which flows out to the most guilty. God, he says, loves his enemies, blesses those who curse him, and does good to those who hate him. He maketh his sun

to rise and his rain to descend upon the evil and the good. And this is the uniform language of the New Testament. There is none good but one, and that is God. God is love; God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. God will have all men to be saved. Herein is love,—not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. We read of his great love, wherewith he loved us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins; of his exceeding great and precious promises, and of the unsearchable riches of his grace. In one word, God is styled the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift, and with whom is neither variableness nor the shadow of turning.

These endearing representations of God, instead of raising a tumultuous excitement among the people, and causing them to tremble in frightful agony, and run wild with despair, filled their hearts with the most grateful emotions, and caused them to look up to their Creator as their Father, Friend, and Saviour, to feel that his love infinitely transcends all human affection, that his eye constantly watches over them for good, and that his guardian Providence will finally exalt them to the skies. Hence shouts of victory, songs of joy and gladness, followed the labors of Jesus and his apostles. Thus it is said, "we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" "there was great joy in that city," and "they rejoiced the more,

saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

In revival preaching, we look in vain for these endearing views of God, this fatherly affection, this undying love, this overflowing goodness. The first great aim of revivalists is, to fix deeply in the soul the impression that God is terribly angry with sinners, that he is about to rise up in his wrath, and, with an arm of infinite vengeance, smite them down to a world of endless agony. In language bold, extravagant, shocking, they tell of his unrelenting justice, of his quenchless anger, and all his mighty machinery of torture. Thus a panic is raised, fear seizes the multitude, reason is dethroned, and in groans of despair, and with frightful contortions of face, the terror-stricken, anxious souls tumultuously inquire how they can avert the anger or propitiate the favor of an enraged Deity. And this excitement is called a revival. And so it is a revival,—a revival of fears and doubts, of distressing apprehensions, of dreadful forebodings,—a revival such as the primitive Christians never witnessed. Thus do we see the infinite difference between revival descriptions of God, and those given in the New Testament. While the former make anger and revenge and cruelty his distinctive characteristics, the latter represent him as the perfection of love, mercy, and kindness, as an unchanging friend of humanity.

This difference is equally great on the subject of punishment. Upon the Jews, that hardened and rebellious people, that formal, canting nation of

hypocrites, who used every effort to shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, who oppressed the widow and the orphan, who were full of extortion and excess, Jesus only once threatened the damnation of hell; and then under circumstances which indisputably prove that he referred to a temporal punishment, and had no reference to a state of endless woe.

Peter, who had so many thousands as seals of his ministry, whose labors were so abundantly blessed, in all his preaching, only once used a word which is rendered *hell*. (The learned agree in saying this does not signify endless woe.) Paul, whose bursting eloquence held in the silence of death the thronged multitude, whose profound discourses fastened conviction upon learned philosophers, whose appeals to the conscience arrested the attention of the careless,—Paul, who carried the conquests of truth into the camp of his enemies, never once threatened sinners with hell. These great apostles were called to address the vilest of sinners, but in all cases they were silent about endless woe. Peter, for instance, in the discourse where he accused the Jews of denying the Holy One and the Just, of killing the Prince of life, denounced no other punishment than that they should be cut off from among the people. Paul, when arraigned before the high priest of the Jews, who judged and punished him contrary to the law, instead of painting, in the lively colors of imagination, the terrors of hell, simply says, “God shall smite thee, thou whited wall.”

*Everlasting*, in connection with *punishment*, is used only twice in the Old Testament,—three times in St. Matthew's Gospel, once in St. Mark's, and once in all the writings of St. Paul. St. Luke never uses it, and St. John neither in his Gospel nor Epistles. It is not found in all the apostles' preaching, recorded in *Acts*, nor in the writings of James and Peter.

How widely different is this from revival preaching! In that, *hell*, with its gnawing worms, its devouring flames, its racks of torture, its despairing groans, its undying agonies, is the great topic of discourse. Extinguish the flames of this, and the right arm of a revival preacher is nerveless; his wonder-working power is gone; the sighs and groans of his people die away, cheerfulness is restored to their hearts, and the strange fire burns no longer on the sacred altar.

Hence the great importance which all revivalists attach to the eternity of torture. Instead of seeking to draw men to God by the attractive power of love, they seek to drive them by the fear of hell.

There are several characteristics in the preaching of revivalists, which it may be well to notice with particular care.

1. *The constancy with which they dwell upon hell.* How many times, gentlemen, do you suppose your leader used this word during a single week of his revival? Would a thousand times be a large estimate? No,—you will say it would be a small estimate. A thousand times in one week!

Ten thousand times in ten weeks!! Now look at Paul. How many times, during his long ministry, did he use it? Come, gentlemen, take your Testaments, and look over his sermons and epistles, and give an answer. The truth is, as we have seen, he did not once threaten sinners with hell! And yet you say Mr. Knapp is a true follower of St. Paul!

2. *The nature of hell torments.* What are your views on this subject? Do you believe in the absurdity of a literal fire? No, gentlemen, you believe nothing of the kind. Neither is there an educated clergyman in Boston that believes any thing of the kind. You understand that the phrases *hell fire* and *fire and brimstone* are figures of speech. If I am wrong in this supposition, I will take the earliest opportunity to make a correction, however much I may feel mortified at the slow advances you are making in biblical knowledge. But I am not wrong; you certainly have outgrown the idea of a literal fire in hell; and, yet, a *literal fire* was the notion preached during your revival! We were told about sinners *roasting* in hell. So vivid were the descriptions of the fire, that some of the more ignorant and nervous ones fancied they could see the *flames*. Think of it,—*roasting* in hell! What a brutal fancy must that man have, who could conceive of such an idea! *Roasting!* Now is not that downright *barbarism!* Does the Bible justify any in preaching such horrid and disgusting cruelties? I think your elder must be familiar with the famous

sermon on Doom's Day, by Isaac Ambrose; for not only does he agree with him in regard to a literal fire, but in talking of hell as though he had witnessed its tortures. I will give you a specimen of Ambrose. He says,—

"Imagine what welcome shall be to the damned souls. Their eyes shall startle, their ears glow, their nostrils suck up flames, their mouths taste bitterness, and for the sense of feeling, they are wrapped in grisly embraces of stinging and stinking flames." "Hell torments are to the uttermost extremity; the fire is an hundred times hotter than the fire of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, that was heated seven times hotter than at usual times." "When the damned have drunken down whole draughts of brimstone one day, they must do the same another day. The eye shall be tormented with the sight of devils, the ears with the hideous yellings and outcries of the damned in flames, the nostrils shall be smothered as it were with brimstone; the hand, the foot, the tongue, and every part, shall fry in flames."

See the resemblance,— "*Fry in flames*"— "*Roasting in hell*." But, gentlemen, this idle fancy, this bugbear, had its agency in your revival; and yet you claim that the revival was God's work!

3. *Dwelling upon the intensity of hell torture.* This is an important part of revival preaching. The suffering of the lost is described as intense beyond endurance. Listen to any revivalist, and you will see that such is the case. Let me call

your attention to a dream by your leader, related to illustrate the torture of hell. I give it as taken down by a reporter. It related to two Universalist clergymen of Vermont, one of whom he said became converted. I can give only the conclusion of the dream. It reads,—

"We then went in ; and, as we passed along, we saw here and there groups of miserable, forsaken-looking people, conversing together. By and by we saw afar off the other Universalist minister, with his hands tied behind him. Soon the devil came along with an iron crowbar and a basin of boiling lava ; and, prying open the mouth of the minister with the crowbar, he poured the whole basin of boiling lava right down the man's throat ; and, O ! it was an awful sight to see the blue smoke roll out of his mouth, ears, nostrils, and every pore of his body ! "

Thus endeth the dream. But the wonder was, that the first thing he heard the next morning was the death of the minister he had dreamed about.

This, gentlemen, is very much like a story related by Ambrose. He says,—

"I have read somewhere, that a voluptuous man, dying and going to this place, was saluted in the following fearful manner : First, Lucifer commands to fetch him a chair, and forthwith a red-hot iron chair was brought, (all sparkling with fire,) and he set thereupon. This done, Lucifer commands again to fetch him drink, and drink of melted lead was brought him in a cup, which they poured into his open mouth ; anon it came running

out of all his members. This done, Lucifer commands again, that, according to his usage, they should fetch him musicians to make him merry ; and a sort of musicians came, with red-hot glowing trumpets, and sounded them at his ears ; anon there came sparks of fire leaping out of his mouth, his eyes, his nostrils, and all about him. This done, Lucifer commands again, that, according to his wonted manner, he should have his concubines ; and, upon this, they bring him to a bed of fire, where furies give him kisses, fiery serpents hug about him, and the gnawing worms suck blood from his heart and breast forever and ever."

Such are some of the figures and stories by which the intensity of hell torture is described. I do not say they are generally of this coarse and revolting character, but this I say,—*the figures used are all false, and wholly unauthorized by the Bible.* *I say, too, that not a single instance can be produced where the inspired writers sought by any such descriptions to excite the multitude.* Where do you find them expatiating, in revival style, upon the intensity of future agony ? Still, this is the way revivals are got up!! Revival preachers describe it by every figure which the most fruitful imagination can invent. Mr. Knapp's uncultivated fancy was exceedingly prolific in imagery to set forth this agony. He dwelt upon it somewhat in the spirit with which the revengeful assail an enemy, or resist an attack upon their rights ; and he seemed to feel and preach as though he should relish the damnation of any man who

would not be converted by him. I do not mean by this, that he is more likely to err here than any one entertaining his opinions: I am aware that the evil of which I speak has been common among preachers of endless misery. It is natural that it should be; for even the lawyer, who pleads against the life of an individual, not unfrequently feels, in the excitement of the moment, as though he could enjoy to look upon the execution of the accused. Partialist ministers have often spoken of the evil of which I complain, and rebuked it in much stronger language than what I employ. I wonder not that they should rebuke it; for it is indescribably horrid to see a man deal out threatenings against sinners in the spirit of revenge.

*4. Dwelling upon the duration of misery.* It has fallen to my lot to hear, on several occasions, what are termed revival preachers; and they all expatiated with great earnestness on the interminable nature of torture. They preached much in the style of Dr. Edwards, whom we have seen was a leader in the revival cause. Allow me to give a single extract from one of his sermons:

"Do but consider what it is to suffer extreme torment forever and ever; to suffer it day and night, from one day to another, from one age to another, from one thousand ages to another; and in adding age to age, and thousands to thousands, in pain, in wailing and lamentation, groaning and shrieking, and gnashing your teeth; with your souls full of dreadful grief and amazement, with your bodies and every member full of racking tor-

ture, without any possibility of getting ease ; without any possibility of moving God to pity by your cries ; without any possibility of hiding yourselves from him ; without any possibility of diverting your thoughts from your pain ; without any possibility of obtaining any manner of mitigation, or help, or change for the better any way. Do but consider how dreadful despair will be in such torment. How dismal it will be, when you are under these racking torments, to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them ; to have no hope ; when you shall wish that you might be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it ; when you shall wish that you might be turned into a toad or a serpent, but shall have no hope of it ; when you would rejoice if you might but have any relief, after you shall have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it ; when, after you shall have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars, in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest day or night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of ever being delivered ; when, after you shall have worn out a thousand more such ages, yet you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer to the end of your torments ; but that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries, incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend up forever and ever ; and that your souls, which have been agitated with the wrath of God all this

while, yet will still exist to bear more wrath ; your bodies, which shall have been burning and roasting all this while in these glowing flames, yet shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through an eternity yet, which will not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past." — *Edwards's Sermons*, vi.

What preaching ! Is it any wonder that Edwards terrified his hearers ? Is it strange that he filled them with horror ? Our modern revivalists are imitators of him. Your Mr. Knapp follows closely in his footsteps, and seeks, by dwelling upon the eternity of torture, to frighten people into religion. But what scriptural authority have any for such a course ? Where do we read that Jesus or the apostles thus expatiated upon the duration of misery ? They expatiated often, and at great length, upon free grace, and the joy of heaven ; but in no instance did they expatiate upon the eternity of suffering ! Point me, gentlemen, if you can, to a single case in the Bible like the one selected from Edwards.

In the foregoing remarks, you have a fair view of revival preaching. It consists chiefly in a description of the *nature, intensity, and eternity*, of hell torments, and this is called gospel preaching !

But revivalists are not satisfied with this. Hence, after they have painted hell in all the glowing colors of which their excited imaginations are capable, and after they have made the affrighted hearer fancy he can actually see the pit, and hear the roar of its flames, and the hopeless groans of its ruined mil-

lions, they proceed to the last act of the scene. It would seem, to one unaccustomed to the operation, that they would be satisfied with laying open the regions of the lost. But this, in their view, is not enough. They therefore tell the hearer that he is hanging directly over this fiery region, by a brittle hair, and that an enraged God has the sword of justice drawn, ready to sever that hair. The near approach of death is dwelt upon in plaintive and touching words. The sinner is made to feel that, in all probability, he will die in a few hours. Instances of sudden death are related. Stories are told of young persons who died in a few moments after they left the house of God. Elder Knapp, you will recollect, gave an account of a young lady who was seriously inclined, that thought she would put off going forward to prayers till the next morning ; but before morning came she was a corpse.

By such measures, they make the timid feel that death has indeed come, and that the present is their only chance. This is, in amount, their language : "Now, sinners, is your only opportunity. If you do not repent to-night, you are ruined forever ! This is your last opportunity ! The Judge is at the door !" Sometimes they take out their watch, and tell the people they can have so many minutes of grace ; and, if they do not repent in that time, the door will be shut, and they will be doomed to hell !

This, gentlemen, is no exaggerated account. It does not come half up to the reality. No descrip-

tion can give an idea of it. You have witnessed the whole in Mr. Knapp's operations, and you know that what I write is true. But why did you give your sanction to his exaggerations and over-drawn pictures? Can you offer any authority for his course? Is there any case mentioned in the Bible, where the men of God called upon sinners to repent, because life was short, and they were in danger of dropping into hell? I must press this question upon your notice. It has often been proposed for the consideration of revivalists, but never has it been answered. You say, *Death is at the door: repent, therefore, now! this night! this moment! or you are lost! lost! lost, forever.* But did Jesus say that? Did Paul, Peter, John, or James say it? Did they thus suspend the destiny of the soul upon a breath, a momentary emotion?

Such is revival preaching. It is terror, terror, terror! It is wrath, wrath, wrath! Gentlemen, so entirely was terror the burden of Elder Knapp's preaching, that many could not suppress a smile, when it was announced that he would preach upon the *love of God*. Elder Knapp preach upon God's love! The idea was comical, indeed. Why, he is clothed with the very garments of vengeance! His name is inseparably associated, in the minds of hundreds, with the groans of the damned, and the pit of despair. The very mention of it is enough to wake up the most painful emotions in their bosoms. Watts had not such a preacher in his mind, when he sung,—

"How beauteous are their feet,  
Who stand on Zion's hill;  
Who bring salvation on their tongues,  
And words of peace reveal."

How unlike the preachers thus described by Dr. Adam Clarke is your friend Elder Knapp! The extract is exceedingly beautiful and appropriate:

"What was the text of the *first preachers* of the *gospel of Christ*? Why, *glory to God in the highest heavens*, and *on earth peace and good-will among men*. This is the elegant and energetic *saying*, which comprises the sum and substance of the gospel of God. This, and this *only*, is the message which all Christ's *pastors* or *shepherds* bring to men. He who, while he professes the religion of Christ, disturbs society by his *preachings* or *writings*, who excludes from the salvation of God all who hold not his *religious* or *political* creed, never knew the nature of the *gospel*, and never felt its power and influence. How can *religious contentions*, *civil broils*, or *open wars*, look that gospel in the face which publishes nothing but *glory to God*, and *peace and good-will among men*? *Crusades*, for the *recovery* of a *holy land*, so called, (by the way, latterly the most unholy in the map of the world,) and *wars* for the *support of religion*, are an insult to the gospel, and blasphemy against God!"

This infinite difference between the preaching of the Bible and the preaching of revivalists shows, beyond dispute, that revivals are the work of men. If they are not, why all these human inventions? Why have the wild vagaries of heated enthusiasts

been made to take the place of the sublime doctrines of God?

Let me suppose a case. Mr. Miller's book, on the end of the world A. D. 1843, contains nineteen lectures. These are exclusively devoted to calculations on the prophecies, and contain no exposition of any doctrine whatever. Now you, gentlemen, believe Mr. Miller's theory is visionary and ridiculous. But suppose you should invite him to deliver those lectures in your churches,—that you should attend, and give him countenance, and lead up the anxious, as you did in the meetings of Mr. Knapp,—what would be the consequence? Gentlemen, you know that there would be twice the number of converts that Elder Knapp made. But would they be made by the Spirit? Would you allow that the Holy Ghost would employ such a visionary scheme to effect the soul's salvation?

Suppose another case. The Bible, you will recollect, speaks of the falling of the stars. Suppose an enthusiast should prepare eight or ten sermons, to prove that the stars will fall in 1843, and crush all who are not converted. You invite him to lecture in your churches; you listen to his arguments with seriousness, pray for his success, and go around to talk with the anxious: would not his labors be attended with signal results? Would he not work wonders equal to those produced by Mr. Knapp?

It is fear, then, gentlemen,—*fear, fear*, which produces your revivals; a fear, too, which *hath torment*. Hence, those ministers who have a

wild imagination, a stentorian voice, and deal chiefly in terror, are the most successful revivalists. It is not enough to preach all the inventions about hell, to which we have alluded ; there have been hundreds of clergymen in New England who did this ; but yet they were not revivalists, for they were too tame in manner. It's the manner, as well as the matter, which does the work ; but would it be thus, if the Spirit produced the effect ?

I am, &c.

## LETTER VII.

**CONTENTS.**—Noted Revivalists—Each has a Series of Revival Sermons, which he delivers wherever he goes—Holy Ghost Preachers—Failures in Attempts to get up Revivals—Causes of the Success attending some Men—Revivals got up—Revivalists not men of superior Goodness—Dogmatism and Foppery of Revivalists—Graceless Hypocrites, successful Revivalists—Proof that Revivals are not God's Work.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,**—For the past few years, Messrs. Finney, Burchard, Littlejohn, Kirk, Maffit, and Knapp, have been chiefly employed in getting up revivals. They have travelled from place to place, preaching a series of sermons, made up of startling positions, inflammatory passages, frightful descriptions of God and hell, bold attacks upon all who oppose their labors, fearful denunciations, and extravagant, ridiculous, and false stories. They use the same sermons wherever they go, and when they have gone through with their course in one place, they leave for another, and the revival stops! The stories which your brother Knapp has retailed here, about liberal Christians, he has retailed in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Hartford, and Providence.

By many, these revivalists are regarded as Holy Ghost preachers, in a peculiar sense, and it is said God always attends their labors by the special outpourings of his Spirit! Hence, when a society thinks best to have a revival, if able to pay the re-

quisite amount, it sends for one of these men. Sometimes churches cannot agree whether it is best to have a revival. Not unfrequently angry disputes arise from the agitation of the question ; and, usually, the result is according to the vote ! I say, usually ; I mean, when the noted revivalists are employed. Failures in other cases are frequent. I have known meetings protracted six, eight, and even ten weeks, without accomplishing any thing whatever. Revivalists of some little celebrity conducted affairs, but no converts were made. Perhaps a little boy or girl was frightened ; but the fright lasted only a few weeks. The want of success was not owing to any unfaithfulness or coldness on the part of the preachers or church members. They all toiled zealously and perseveringly. The pulpit blazed day after day, and night after night, with the fires of hell. Nothing was left undone. Anxious seats were prepared, exhorters sent from house to house, letters were written, tracts distributed, stories told, liberal Christians denounced, old professors acknowledged their short-comings, &c. &c., but the Spirit did not move upon the face of the waters; none were converted or awakened. The reason is obvious. The managers had not the art of terrifying ; they had no power over the passions ; they were too ignorant of human nature, and could not take advantage of the weaknesses of the multitude. The success of Burchard is owing to the readiness with which he reads mankind, and his great art in manœuvring. Elder Knapp's success is owing to his

art as a manœuverer, the dogmatism and assurance with which he preaches and denounces, and the horrid terror in which he deals. Whitefield's success was owing to his indescribable power over the passions of his hearers, and Wesley's to the goodness of his heart, and the greatness of his enthusiasm.

Thus revivals are got up ; not by preaching, and praying, and singing ; but by something in the manager,— some peculiarity which gives him power over the multitude. You must, gentlemen, acknowledge this ; for it is the only way by which to account for the failures that so often attend revival efforts. There are but few men who can be successful revivalists. Among the host of preachers, which you and other limitarian sects have, there are only fifteen or twenty distinguished for getting up stirs. Now, are these all the truly zealous and faithful men you can number ? Have they any more Christian zeal and fidelity than hundreds of others ?

The whole truth is unwittingly told by revivalists themselves. They talk about getting up revivals,— about Mr. Burchard's revival, Mr. Kirk's revival, Mr. Maffit's revival, Mr. Knapp's revival. This is using language right ; for these men are just as much the producers of their revivals, as a clock is the workmanship of its maker.

Look at the votes of churches. They read like this : "Voted, to invite brother Knapp, brother Burchard, or brother Finney, to labor with us as an Evangelist, for the purpose of getting up a re-

vival." Mr. Knapp was invited here for that particular purpose ; and he accomplished his end. He got up a revival.

I wish to ask, gentlemen, whether revivalists are particularly distinguished for goodness ? I do not ask whether they are particularly distinguished for piety ; for that word is used in a bad sense. It signifies, as generally employed, one who wears a long face, heaves deep sighs, frowns upon every thing like pleasure, and is extremely bigoted and conceited. I, therefore, use the word goodness. Are they distinguished for this? Have you found them more honest, more benevolent, more kind, more candid, more charitable, more humble, more conscientious, than other ministers ? Would you place Elder Knapp above Dr. Sharp and Professor Sears, in these respects ? Have you not known revivalists so dogmatical, self-righteous, conceited, and headstrong, as to fill with utter disgust all familiar with them ? Have you not known others who were vain beyond endurance, regular clerical fops, who had no weight of character, and who thought more of playing the actor than preaching truth ? Have you never known one to whom the following description, by Pike, was particularly applicable ?

"The thoughts were common-place, the language good. But it was the *manner* that struck me. Sometimes he smiled benignantly ; at other times, frowned like thunder, or scowled with contempt ; frequently he threw himself over the front of the pulpit, and lolling with the most graceful

negligence, conversed with those beneath him in the ‘how-do-you-do?’ style of a boarding-school miss ; anon, he was erect in the attitude of a pugilistic champion, bellowing like a stentor, and threatening destruction, at least to the ears, of all around him. I sat amidst this storm, and sunshine ; and, casting down my eyes, for my heart was low enough already, thought within myself, ‘This is not preaching Christ Jesus the Lord, but it is trying to preach Mr. ——, the actor, the would-be Roscius of the day.’ ”

Now men like these, by their buffoonery, will draw the multitude after them, and get up revivals, when those of real Christian worth will go along in the ordinary manner of a good and zealous minister. Gentlemen, if revivals are of God, there is something unaccountable in this! The Melancthons and Luthers of the church, the men of long-tried goodness, who have for years been burning and shining lights, are permitted of God to labor without a special blessing upon their ministry, while a vain fop, or a coarse, bigoted, dogmatical, self-willed man is chosen as an honored instrument in the holy work of salvation! Is there not something here which shocks your reverence, and weakens your confidence in the rectitude of the divine government?

Do you say that my conclusion rests upon supposition, and that revivalists are among the most pious men that ever adorned the church? I answer, — that may be the case with some ; but you know it is not with all ; you know that some of

the most graceless hypocrites that ever walked the earth have been successful revivalists.

An elderly gentleman by my side says that a great revival once occurred in Langdon, N. H. which was got up and carried on by a man grossly wicked. A clergyman, by the name of Frost, produced a great revival in the same State, while he was practising deceptions, for which he was shortly after excommunicated. Scores of such cases could be mentioned.

You are no doubt familiar with the career of Davenport and Tennant, and of the wonderful revivals they produced, and yet one of them was an exceedingly immoral man. I could name revivalists that have preached in two of your pulpits, and yet you have cut them off for vices in which they were living at the time of their revivals! I had occasion once to call one of those clergymen to an account for falsehoods told during his revival; and he justified himself by saying, *he must do all he could to build up his society!*

Let me not be misunderstood. I have no slurs to throw against your clergymen as a body; I have no reason to believe they are not as good and sincere as the clergymen of any sect, though I must say, if I could justify my conscience in pursuing the course which Elder Knapp has against Universalists, I could make you out a graceless set. But I will never be guilty of the meanness of judging the many by the few. I refer to those persons, not for the purpose of casting odium, but to show that hollow-hearted hypocrites can be suc-

cessful revivalists! Gentlemen, look at this fact—reflect upon it—weigh it well—and then tell me whether you will pretend that revivals are the work of God. Why, God knows the heart; he sees the mockery of him who pretends to serve Jesus, while he serves Satan; and would he, the lover of purity, pour out his Spirit upon the labors of a wolf in sheep's clothing? No, gentlemen; you will not pretend it; you know that God has no agency in those revivals produced by such men. And yet, look at their revivals; listen to the prayers and experiences of their converts; and what will you find that leads to a suspicion of wrong? The truth is, the revivals of hypocrites are just like the revivals of Messrs. Kirk, Burchard, and Knapp. They are all, therefore, the work of men.

I am, &c.

## LETTER VIII.

**CONTENTS.**— The better portion of Limitarian Churches not converted by Revivalists — The Author's View of Conversion — Revival Converts generally ignorant, nervous or superstitious — Jesus and the Apostles took no Advantage of the Credulity and weakness of those they addressed — Instability of many — Rejoicing over Converts from liberal Sentiments — Cruelty of terrifying the weak and young — Case of a young Lady — Case of a young Man — Relief found in Universalism — Jesus and the Apostles addressed the Reason — Never addressed the Passions.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,** — The character of the people affected by modern revivals, has been often alluded to by writers who have preceded me on this subject. They have declared that converts are made chiefly from among the ignorant, nervous, and superstitious. And, gentlemen, I am ready to reaffirm what has been so often declared, but never disproved. I must, however, say a word to guard you from misapprehension. I do not mean that your churches are wholly composed of such persons. I know they are not. I know they embrace many highly intelligent and sensible persons. But means like those employed by elder Knapp never converted them. You would not think of addressing such in the style you address another class. The conversion of such was like the conversion of those who join my church. They felt penitent for sin ; they mourned over their departure from duty, and over their coldness, deadness, and ingratitude ; they

saw the need of a Saviour, and, when they embraced him by faith, they saw the riches of God's goodness, they experienced emotions to which they were before strangers, and they could bless God for what he had done. Perhaps this change was wrought in a week, perhaps in a month, perhaps in a year. The time was immaterial; though the longer the time, the greater was your confidence in the reality of the change. This is what I call conversion; and, unless I have been misinformed by hundreds with whom I have conversed, this is the conversion experienced by the great body of intelligent limitarians.

This, however, is not the conversion effected in a revival meeting. No; it is produced by the ordinary means of grace. You, gentlemen, I am confident, know something of the value of such a conversion; for, no doubt, the ornaments of your churches are those who have been thus changed.

These remarks are sufficient to guard me from all misapprehension, when I say, revival converts are chiefly made from among the ignorant, nervous, and superstitious. I have witnessed a great many revivals, and I know not an exception.

In all communities there is a large number of people who never seek to inform themselves on any subject whatever. They know the way to their workshop and over their farm, and how to do what they have seen their fathers do. But they never read — they never reason — they have no desire for intellectual improvement. They believe the Bible, and go to church, and hold to the religion

of their minister. If asked, however, what he believes, they would be very likely to say, "*O, he believes what we do.*"

The nervous constitute quite a portion of society. You will find them among the old and young, high and low, rich and poor. On some occasions, a word spoken in a peculiar tone will completely destroy their self-possession, and subject reason entirely to the control of their nervous system. Any thing terrific, whether it be the mighty thunder which shakes the heavens, or the fierce denunciations of a fanatic, has a peculiar effect upon this class. I have known them tremble and turn pale, merely from listening to an account of great bodily suffering, or an escape from extreme danger.

The superstitious are, perhaps, quite as numerous as the nervous. How many are there who believe in dreams, and visions, and omens,—in lucky and unlucky days. The breaking of a looking-glass will spread a gloom over a whole family. The story of a haunted house will fill a whole neighborhood with terror.

To believe in such superstitions, is to acknowledge the existence of something supernatural connected with the affairs of life. And this is believed by thousands. It is believed by thousands who have outgrown a belief in the particular superstitions to which we have referred. How often do people say, when trouble comes,—“We have been impressed for weeks that something evil would soon befall us.” The impulses of the heart, when of a virtuous character, are frequently attributed to

a supernatural power, while those of an evil character are attributed to the agency of the devil. Thus opposing miraculous influences are supposed to be constantly exerted. Hence the seriousness with which many talk about emotions whose origin they attribute to a supernatural power.

Such are the three classes which revivalism affects. They are prepared, by the state which they are in, to yield to its influences. What can be easier than to operate, by the means you employ, upon the ignorant, nervous, and superstitious? And yet, gentlemen, you think the conversion of twenty or thirty such persons a most signal triumph of grace,—a mighty victory to achieve. But, if revivals are the work of God, why are the converts chiefly made from these classes? Why are not the more intelligent portion of community converted? why not those of a strong nerve? and why not such as have outgrown the superstitions of the world? It will not answer to say, these latter classes are more wicked than the others; for such is far from being the fact. The reason is obvious: the ignorant, nervous and superstitious are more easily wrought upon by revival measures than the others. They are not so well qualified to distinguish between assertion and argument, error and truth. This is the only way by which to account for the fact we are considering; but this is fatal to the idea that revivals are produced by a divine agency.

I have said that it is easy to excite and terrify the ignorant, nervous, and superstitious. I wish

now to ask, whether you consider it proper to take advantage of the weaknesses of such? It is always painful to point out impositions, and expose deceptions; and I will, therefore, say no more on this topic than a sense of duty compels. Let me, then, simply ask you to look at the example of Christ and his apostles. They had every opportunity, which could be afforded, to impose upon those who heard them. The stupendous miracles which they performed; the tremendous power with which their doctrines were clothed; the mighty revolutions which they effected, furnished weapons that could have been wielded with terrible effect upon the uninformed and the superstitious. With a little of the magic touch of a revivalist, such might have been impressed with the notion that eternal dangers threatened on every hand; that an immortal fiend was waiting to bear them to the dominions of wo; that they were resting upon the slumbering volcanoes of hell; and that the power which had given sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, and life to the dead, would soon be exerted to render them miracles of endless suffering.

Look, for instance, at the Saviour, casting out devils. Of the character and number of these, the Jews entertained the most superstitious notions. They supposed them to possess a marvellous power, and a fiendish nature. Now, when the people saw them submitting to Jesus, and obeying his commands, how easily might he have employed these as instruments of terror in his hands, and have led the wondering multitude to believe, that, without

instant submission to his will, he would doom them to endless agony ! In this way, the wildest commotions might have been raised, and terror sent to the depths of every soul. But no ; the Saviour would not act upon principles so degrading and pernicious ; he would not touch strings so dangerous, and which would fill the heart with such painful and distracting emotions.

But how is it with revivalists ? Do they not people earth and hell with demons ? Do they not aim continually to impress the multitude with an awful dread of their power ? and do they not describe, in the most terrific manner, a mighty leader of devils, and represent him as constantly seeking the endless ruin of the soul ? On the ignorant, nervous, and superstitious, who believe all that drops from the lips of a revivalist, these wild and supremely absurd notions fall with a crushing and distracting power. They imagine that they hear the clanking of chains in the prison of wo, and are haunted by night and day with spectres and ghosts.

There is a deception in this which is altogether unpardonable. It is imposing on credulity, it is seeking to convert people by measures which enlightened men would be ashamed to employ. Now, in all the preaching of Christ and the apostles, there is nothing which resembles this in the slightest degree. Their practice is sufficient to brand with infamy a deception so barefaced and cruel.

What did Paul, in his discourse at Athens, say ? "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." Yes ; he made a direct

attack upon their *superstitions*. Instead of seeking to fasten such degrading chains upon them, he poured the light of truth upon their minds ; and, in all his discourse on that occasion, not a word of terror was uttered, not a syllable to produce a feverish excitement.

When Paul and Silas were unfettered by a miraculous interposition of God, when the doors of their prison were thrown open, and an earthquake made it tremble to its foundation, what an occasion was offered for striking terror to the hearts of the jailer and his family, by overwhelming descriptions of an angry God, and an endless hell ! But not a word was offered on either of these topics. The jailer, filled with fear at the miracle which had liberated the prisoners, came trembling before them, desiring to know what he must do to be saved. And he was told to *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. This was the doctrine which he heard, and by which himself and family were converted.

Now, gentlemen, look at the persons affected, and the means employed, by revivalists, and can you not account for the results produced without supposing a supernatural agency to be exerted ? Would not a system of measures, having no reference to matters of religion, if calculated to create alarm, and so framed as to take every possible advantage of the credulity and weakness of the ignorant and excited multitude, produce effects equally as great and astonishing as are witnessed in a revival ?

'There is another consideration worthy of attention. Revival converts are chiefly from those who have

no stability of character. You are aware that many persons are like a weather vane, which turns with every change of the wind. They go with the current. They have no independence or firmness, and cannot stand a moment against any opposition. I recollect that, while journeying once in Pennsylvania, I had a conversation with a Methodist clergyman, in the presence of a man of this description, whose heart was always in his mouth. When I offered an argument, the listener was on my side ; but when my Methodist brother offered one, he was on his side ; and thus he changed back and forth from Methodism to Universalism something like a dozen times. He was even worse than the Dutch judge, who said that both parties had the case.

I do not, gentlemen, profess much skill in management, or to have much power of persuasion ; but, if you will put Elder Knapp's converts under my charge, and give me the control of them as long as he had, I will make them all Universalists, and heartily ashamed of the spirit which some of them have manifested. I feel certain that I could do this ; for persons that have yielded so readily to the moulding power of man, would be easily brought to support the truth.

During your revival, you made a great ado when a convert was obtained from the ranks of liberal Christians. This you did, too, when five were leaving your own ranks for every one obtained from the opposite side. I know, gentlemen, of dozens that have joined the Universalists and Unitarians since your revival operations commenced.

And yet, when Elder Knapp succeeded in terrifying a person who had attended a liberal meeting, all eyes sparkled with joy, and the event was proclaimed, not only from the pulpit, but at every corner of the streets. No matter how ignorant, nervous, superstitious, or unstable, the person was, the glorification was the same. The conversion of a girl of sixteen was an occasion of loud rejoicing, and held up as proof that liberal sentiments were alarming heresies !

And to all this, you, gentlemen, have given countenance ! Yes ; ministers, settled over enlightened congregations in Boston, have countenanced such management ! Why, look at the Universalist churches of this city. More than one half who attend them were once connected with partialist societies. And yet, if you can terrify *one* who has been connected with us, and induce him to leave, it is proof positive that we are wrong ! This is lame logic, indeed.

I cannot close this letter without alluding to the cruelty of terrifying the ignorant, and those of weak minds, as was done during the revival. Some, in their agony, called on me. I found their minds poisoned with a slavish fear. They were indescribably wretched. God appeared to them like a fiend, whom they could neither love nor trust. What they had heard about hell haunted them continually. They were bewildered — they could not reason — they were like a terrified child. They wept bitterly, and reproached themselves for having listened to such a man as Mr. Knapp. His

frightful denunciations were constantly ringing in their ears. One young woman said, before she heard him she loved her Maker ; she delighted in his worship ; she could commit herself to him when she retired at night, and thank him for his preserving care when she awoke in the morning ; and that she could rejoice in his love with a full and glad soul. But Mr. Knapp's preaching had hardened her heart ; she could not pray ; she could not love her Maker ; she could not worship him. Truth, however, was mightier than fear, and the cloud was at length driven from her mind, and she was filled with a peace which passeth knowledge. Others, fleeing from the storm of fanaticism, found comfort in the gospel of infinite love, and were enabled to throw off the immense burden which had, for many days, almost crushed them to the dust. One young man, who had been following the revival meetings for a whole week without obtaining any spiritual comfort, found such thrilling joy by hearing the truth dispensed, that he could not refrain from interrupting the speaker, in order to give utterance to the feelings of his heart. A great many have said to me, " We never should have attended your meeting, and embraced your religion, had it not been for the manner in which you were assailed."

Now reflect, gentlemen, upon the deep and distracting wretchedness which was caused. I need not give any further description of it, for you saw it ; yes, you saw it in the dark gloom which shaded the countenance of the terrified, and in the

almost hopeless anguish expressed by their groans and sighs. Have you any evidence that such fear and misery were created by the preaching of Jesus and the apostles? Did not the people wonder at the *gracious* words which proceeded from the mouth of Jesus? Not so during your revival. Then, they wondered and trembled at the terrific words which proceeded out of the mouth of the preacher. Was there not great joy in Samaria, when Philip preached the gospel there? But, during your revival, there was great sorrow among all who believed in the doctrines to which they listened! Did not timid and credulous females go weeping from your meeting through the streets? Here was great sadness, not great joy!

I will only add,—revivalists address themselves entirely to the passions. All their appeals are to these. Not so, however, with Christianity. It is the distinguishing glory of this, that its laws, precepts, and motives, are characterized by reason, and adapted to intelligent and moral beings. Hence, its divine Founder and holy apostles uniformly addressed the understanding, it being the only medium through which a rational religion could reach the heart, conscience, and affections. They not only expressly commanded people to hear for themselves, to prove all things, and try the spirits, but all their discourses were fraught with the richest instructions. Look at the Saviour's sermon on the mount. The blessings of meekness, and purity of soul; the excellency and glory of the gospel; the perfection and immutability of the law; the dread-

ful evil and punishment of sin ; the undying love and forgiving spirit of his religion ; its unwearying and unostentatious charity ; the inward fervent devotion which it inspires ; the boundless and exhaustless treasures which it reveals ; the firm and unshaken confidence which it excites in God ;—these were the great doctrines which he presented to his astonished hearers. Look at Paul's discourse in Athens. His themes were the existence of God ; his overruling Providence ; the dependence of the world and all things upon him ; the nature of true worship ; the universal spiritual presence of God ; the relationship of mankind to each other, and their Maker ; the absurdity of heathenism with its senseless gods ; the light and joy of the gospel day ; the ruling power of the righteous Judge, and the resurrection of the dead. These instructive sentiments were illustrated and enforced by the beauties and riches of nature ; by the grandeur and glory of the heavens, and by every object on which the eye could rest or the imagination picture.

Gentlemen, can you find one impassioned, declamatory address in the New Testament ? I do not ask whether the whole of that precious book is of that character, but whether it contains one discourse addressed solely to the passions ?

I am, &c.

## LETTER IX.

**CONTENTS.** — Revival Converts — Ignorant of the Bible — Revival Preaching not instructive — Confusion of Revival Meetings — Surrender of Reason — Sectarian Bitterness of Revival Preachers — Bitterness of Elder Knapp — His daily personal Attacks upon the Author — Devil's Office in the Author's Church — Converts to Universalism — Converts made by a bitter preacher will necessarily be bitter — Mr. Knapp's new Version of the Scripture Test of Piety — Pride of Revival Converts — Their Self-righteousness — Their Censoriousness — Their Want of Candor — Their Hatred of Liberal Christians — Party Love — Universalists treated as Outlaws — Gloom and Sadness of Revival Converts — Their Piety contrasted with the Piety of the Gospel — Will judge none, except by their Fruits — No Resemblance between Revival Converts and the New Testament Christians.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,** — From the view which we have taken of revival measures, and the spirit and character of revival preachers, we have no reason to expect any thing very favorable of revival converts. You may not be prepared now, to assent to such an idea ; but before one year shall have passed away, you may find, to your sorrow, that it is indeed true. We have, in our denomination, several clergymen, once connected with limitarian sects, who have had much personal experience in regard to such converts, and they have given me no very favorable account of them. Their account, however, was quite as favorable as what some of your own ministers have given me.

Before proceeding to give the prominent characteristics of such converts, I wish to call your

attention to the fact that they are entirely ignorant of the Bible. They never made it their study, and they are no better qualified to judge of its doctrines than of the Koran. A revival meeting is a poor place to obtain a knowledge of divine truth. The sermons delivered there are made up of stories, and terrific descriptions of God and hell. They are not designed to explain the Bible, and to unfold the great doctrines of grace.

Not only so, a revival meeting is generally a scene of confusion and disorder, and the very last place for thought and investigation. I have been at a meeting when some were praying ; others exhorting ; others rolling upon the floor ; others groaning in agony, and others beating a poor woman, to drive the devil from her. I have seen several praying at once in the same church, and each one called upon the Lord quite as loud as Elijah recommended the prophets of Baal to cry. If you ever attended a camp-meeting, you know something of the confusion to which I refer. Is such a meeting the place to learn truth, to acquire a knowledge of God, his government, and the plan of redemption ? Besides, revivalists always say, "Do n't reason — reason is carnal — wait till you can see things with spiritual eyes." Thus they call upon people to make an entire surrender of reason. Great efforts are made to induce them to do this. If one under concern says, "It does not appear reasonable to suppose that a holy God has reprobated some to endless death, or that man is totally depraved, or that a God of mercy would

doom any to undying agony," he is told not to trust his reason, that it is depraved, and that the devil is the author of such suggestions. The moment reason is thus surrendered, the revivalist has gained his point. The person who has made the surrender will do precisely as he is directed. This procedure, let me say, is not peculiar to revivalists. It is the course taken by all who preach the Trinity, total depravity, reprobation, and endless misery. It is not till people set reason aside, that they can receive these doctrines.

Such is the opportunity which a revival meeting affords to gain knowledge. What, then, can revival converts know? By what means are they qualified to judge in regard to truth? Still we see them around warning and exhorting aged and learned men, and gravely pronouncing doctrines false, held by some of the ablest divines of the church!

There is another fact which I wish to mention. Revivalists are usually men of great sectarian bitterness. We doubt, however, whether any ever was more deeply imbued with this spirit than Elder Knapp. Prompted by it, he has collected all the scandal which he has been able to find, in different parts of the country, in relation to the Unitarians and Universalists, and this he uses wherever he goes. Not satisfied with this, he makes personal attacks upon the clergymen who are settled in the places he visits. Gentlemen, in whose veracity I can confide, have said that he assailed me, daily, and declared that the devil kept an office

in my church. I will not soil this page by recording his vile expressions and bitter denunciations. I can only say, his hatred and abuse have awakened a curiosity that has brought hundreds to my church, who, perhaps, would never have entered it. For the last six weeks, it has been overrun every Sabbath. Some, perhaps, came to see whether I had a *cloven* foot; others, to ascertain whether his representations were correct; and others, possibly, to see what sort of an office the devil kept. Truth, gentlemen, is mighty, and many whom curiosity brought to our sanctuary, now call it their spiritual home, their refuge from fanaticism, the birthplace of their souls. Thus does the wrath of man praise the Lord.

That the converts made by such a preacher should be bitter and denunciatory, is natural. "Like priest, like people." They could not listen to him with approbation, for a single evening, without having poison enough infused into their hearts to make them ripe for any crusade to which he should command them. He has given a new version of a very important portion of Scripture: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye hate and denounce Universalists and Unitarians."

There is still another fact to which I must allude. The course pursued in relation to revival converts was by no means favorable to humility. No sooner did they graduate from the anxious bench, than they were called upon to speak, and put forward as the principal exhorters. Their praise was sounded in every meeting; they were

held up as bright lights, and great ornaments to the cause of God. They immediately adopted the language which they had heard from other exhorters, and talked about "*we saints*," and "*you sinners*," and soon began to imagine, not only that they were among the saints, but that they were *the saints!* It is painful to see ignorant boys and girls thus inflated with spiritual pride, and exalting themselves wherever they go. It is also painful to hear one of any age, who has just taken upon him the Christian profession, say to a man whose life has been unblemished, "*Stand by, I am holier than thou!*"

The foregoing remarks will prepare us to look at the characteristics of revival converts.

1. Many of them are extremely *censorious*. A great many cases have come to my knowledge within a few weeks, where Mr. Knapp's converts could hardly find language sufficiently condemnatory to apply to liberal Christians. There are, gentlemen, some rare specimens of censoriousness now in this city. I shudder to think that persons possessing such a spirit are about to be admitted to a church, and receive the holy communion. Why, they are chiefly employed in the work of condemnation. They are not content with condemning me, and other liberal clergymen, and their people, but they condemn Dr. Sharp, and pronounce him a cold formalist. They condemn orthodox clergymen, and pronounce them destitute of piety. Are these converts made by the Holy Spirit?

2. Many of them are *uncandid*. That candor

is one of the virtues of a true Christian, you, gentlemen, will not deny. But a greater want of it, I think, was never manifested, than by some who have, as it is said, been recently brought out. They have indeed been *brought out*; but it is out of the spirit of candor. They daily condemn a whole denomination for the immoralities of one or two members. Hear Dr. Blair on candor. Speaking of a candid man, he says,—

"How much soever he may blame the principles of any sect or party, he never confounds under one general censure all who belong to that party or sect. He charges them not with such consequences of their tenets as they refuse and disavow. From one wrong opinion, he does not infer the subversion of all sound principles; nor from one bad action, conclude that all regard to conscience is overthrown."

Gentlemen, how many such persons, do you suppose, could be found among all the converts made by Elder Knapp? Judging from a few exhibitions I have seen, I fear that some have forgotten that candor is a Christian virtue. I doubt, however, whether the Holy Ghost has forgotten this; and I therefore conclude that those converts, so grossly uncandid, were made by some other agency. I will only add,— *It seems not a little surprising, that such a large number of the converts should be wanting in candor, when Elder Knapp is so remarkably distinguished for this virtue!* Perhaps we had better add this fact to the *mysteries* of religion.

3. Many of the converts are strangers to *Christian love*. Be particular in regard to the language I use. I say *Christian* love. That they all have love, I do not doubt. They love those who believe with them, and uphold the man who has terrified them. They love just as the Jews did, when they crucified Jesus. The world is filled with this party love. But it falls as far short of Christian love, as heathenism falls below Christianity. Those who possess it often cherish a perfect hatred towards all not of their clique ; and, while they will almost give up their lives for a brother in the faith, they will burn at the stake a man who rejects their creed. Look at the Jews, crucifying the Saviour ; at Saul, persecuting the Christians ; at the Romish church, with its inquisition ; at Calvin, burning Servetus ; at the Puritans, opposing the Baptists ; at the Baptists, abusing the Unitarians and Universalists. Elder Knapp, in one of his harangues against Universalists, expressly declared that it is wrong to preach against any *Christian* denomination ; but as Universalists are not Christians, it is right to preach against them ; that is, if we allow his sermon to explain his meaning, it is right to misrepresent, abuse, and slander them. Gentlemen, the principle here set forth has guided all persecutors, in every age of the church. It says heretics are outlaws, and have no claim to the rights and privileges of Christians. Your denomination, in its infancy, was shamefully oppressed by the operations of this unrighteous principle. “ *The Bap-*

*tists are not Christians,"* said your opposers, and can, therefore, be lawfully abused and oppressed.

Many of the converts, made during your revival, act upon this principle. They neither respect the feelings nor the character of those who differ from them. Persons connected with liberal congregations have repeatedly told me, that nothing could surpass the abuse which was heaped upon them. Malignity itself, they said, could not treat them worse than those converts did. Ridicule, misrepresentation, and falsehood were weapons which they wielded from morning till evening. The result is, persons who walked pleasantly and harmoniously together, are now separated; and many, once amiable, agreeable, pleasant, and candid, have become exactly the reverse!

Gentlemen, is this the fruit of Christianity? Is this the spirit of Christ? Do these persons feel the workings of that love which leads us to treat all men as brethren? Are they Christians? If they are, I will lay no claim to the name. If they have religion, I want nothing of it. The heathen religion is far preferable.

But they are not Christians, if we may be allowed to judge by their fruits. The Bible says, "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we *love* the brethren." That is the *test*. No man, then, can be a Christian, who does not love the *whole world*. Thus James says, — "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, — thou shalt *love thy neighbor as thyself*, — ye do well; but if ye

have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." (ii. 8, 9.)

4. Many of the converts are sad and gloomy ; they appear like persons oppressed by anxiety, or worn out with care. They are not cheerful or smiling. They even think it wrong to smile. Piety with them is austerity and gloom. With a distorted visage and saddened feelings, they go about, condemning cheerfulness, and dooming to endless perdition all who wear a smile of gladness upon the countenance. And though all nature is lighted up with cheerfulness ; though the sun rises in glory and sets in beauty ; though the moon walks in her brightness, and the flocks sport with joy ; though the gospel is a message of joy, and heaven consists in songs of joy,—they are sad and dejected, and deny themselves every pleasure and emotion of gladness. Their piety seems to have no connection with the kind affections, Christian love, and lively gratitude. It is something foreign from regard to mankind, from the proper government of the feelings, from dealing justly and loving mercy, from doing to others as we would be done by. If you can conceive of a man without love, kindness, affection, cheerfulness,—a kind of living, moving, breathing being, without soul ; a man in shape, but a statue in coldness and hardness,—you will have some faint idea of their piety.

Gentlemen, such piety is the relic of a barbarous age, a monkish superstition. True religion was never designed to produce a piety like this. On no. It was designed to cultivate the affections, to

strengthen the ties which bind us together, to keep the flame of love alive and glowing, to give us dignity without austerity, sobriety without sadness, devotion without gloom, pleasure without licentiousness, cheerfulness without boisterous mirth, amusement without excess.

The man of true piety is not a being without heart ; neither is he a gloomy being, who haunts the social circle, sighs at our joys, moans at our cheerfulness, and laments at our gladness. Christian piety walks forth in life, a spirit of peace and animation, smiling in prosperity and weeping in adversity ; cheerful in health, in the discharge of duty, and the interchange of kind offices ; but solemn in prayer, reverential in worship, and resigned in affliction. It guides parents in training up their children, and in walking before them in dignity and love. It teaches children to honor their father and mother, and to reverence the laws of God and the worship of his house. It makes neighbors cordial in their attachments, social in their intercourse, free in their offices of kindness. It visits the widow and orphan in their affliction, watches at the door of poverty, and lingers at the couch of the dying. And it goes about doing good, cheering the disconsolate, comforting the mourner, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and raising up the bowed down. This, gentlemen, is the piety of the gospel. You will find it in the temple of praise, in the social circle, in the domestic circle, and with the silent worshipper. Instead of being clothed in sackcloth and ashes, its garment

is praise, its song salvation, and its end unlimited glory.

Such are some of the characteristics of many of the converts made during your revival. I do not say all are like these; for I will not pretend to judge concerning those of whose lives I am ignorant. I fear, however, that my description is applicable to all. They were all converted by the same means; and, as we cannot gather grapes of thorns, it is reasonable to infer that they are generally alike.

I will only ask, gentlemen, whether these are the characteristics of a Christian, and whether you will pretend that the Holy Ghost had any agency in their conversion. Compare these persons with the Christians described in the New Testament, and see if you can discover any resemblance in their leading traits of character.

I am, &c.

---

## LETTER X.

**CONTENTS.**— Signs and Tests of Revival Religion—Can be relied on with no Confidence—Are Evidence of Religious Dissipation—Extract from Prof. Sparks—Signs and Tests of Revival Religion unlike those of the Religion of Christ—Love and Deeds of Virtue the true Evidences of Piety—Revival Religion wanting in Permanency—Different in its practical Effects from the Religion of Christ—Fanaticism—True Religion—Getting Religion—The old Pagan Philosophy—The Tailor who had got Religion—Religion is Goodness—Quotations from the New Testament—The Conversions on the Day of Pentecost—Unlike modern Conversions—Different Terms employed to express the Christian Character—Religion the right Exercise of the Mind—Three Things make a Christian—Different Methods of getting Religion.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,**—The signs and tests of revival religion are entirely different from those of the religion of the New Testament. The former are made to vary according to the peculiar sentiments by which they are produced; but, in the main, they are violent party feelings, loud censure of irreligion, unreserved denunciation of supposed heresy and heretics, and a punctual attendance on all meetings which may be appointed, however delicate the health, inclement the weather, or pressing the avocations of life. You hear a revivialist catechise his hearers, and his questions will relate, either to the foregoing particulars, or to the inquiry, whether they have seen themselves lost and condemned to everlasting burnings, exposed to the infinite wrath of an enraged Deity; wheth-

er they receive with undoubting confidence the holy mysteries of religion; whether they can see the justice of God in cutting off sinners; and whether they have been instantaneously converted. Those who can answer these questions satisfactorily, are pronounced heirs of grace and children of God.

Now, as it respects these signs and tests, there are two things which require our special attention:

1. They are extremely uncertain, and can be relied on with no confidence. A man may have them all, and still be a tyrant in his family, a villain in his dealings, and licentious in his practices. His occasional excitements may be nothing but mere animal feelings, his depressing fears, nothing but false and degrading views of God, and his fits of devotion may be the mere impulses of passion, wanting reality and heartiness. The thousands who exhibit these signs and tests, that are destitute of Christian love and internal principles of holiness, justify these remarks. I have known many persons who gave all these evidences of piety, and were extremely zealous in praying and exhorting, and deeply affected on religious matters, that were at the same time grossly dishonest in their dealings, and daily committing great crimes. I cannot refrain from mentioning one instance. A young man, in the employ of a Universalist, became converted, and had a very marvellous experience indeed. He was brought out into great light, and was regarded as a very shining ornament in the church. He was particularly hostile

to Universalists, and declared that they held to the devil's doctrine. And yet all this time he was defrauding the man for whom he labored, and could have been sent to the penitentiary for offences committed during his season of religious frenzy.

2. Revival signs and tests of religion are evidences of religious dissipation rather than religious practice. People may run the endless round of revival meetings, spend their days in detailing experiences, giving exhortations, and listening to religious harangues, and not be influenced by any higher motive than a mere love of "change, novelty, and gossiping." "That same restlessness of temperament," says Professor Sparks, "which is the root of all dissipation, is also the origin of its religious variety ; for what is the spirit and essence of dissipation of any kind, but a perpetual desire of finding that pleasure abroad which cannot be found, or which cannot be felt, at home ? And where is the mighty difference between the dissipation of the church, or the conventicle, and the dissipation of the ball-room, the theatre, or the tea-table ? I confess that I see very little. Many of those who now run after every preacher, and are profuse of their presence at every prayer-meeting, are the very people, who, engaged by objects of another class, would be seen at every dance, raree show, and assembly, the foremost of the forward, and the giddiest of the giddy ; or else, perhaps, wasting the precious time of their more sober and domestic acquaintance in endless details

and disquisitions of fashion, dress, amusement, parties, faces, furniture, politics, and scandal. For my own part, I prefer the latter kind of dissipation to the former. I would much rather hear flippancy discussing frippery, than quoting scripture. I would listen with infinitely more complacency and patience to a knot of triflers criticising the gesture and pronunciation of a play actor, than to a knot of more solemn triflers engaged with the text and tones of a preacher. I think ignorance appears to greater advantage in settling a point of etiquette, than enforcing a point of Calvinism; and that vanity is more appropriately employed in arranging a party to a watering-place, than in appointing a mission to the Indies. But folly would hardly be folly, if it always kept within its own proper department; and therefore, among the rest of its excursions, it has intruded into the domains of religion; and there it walks about with a demure gait and a lengthened face — which are circumstances, by the by, that prove it to be a stranger — but still with the same heart, and the same disposition, and the same spirit, with which it danced among the vanities in the haunts of worldly pleasure, and joined its voice to the wild chorus of merriment and riot."

3. The signs and tests of revival religion bear no resemblance to those given in the New Testament. That says, — "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that saith he loves God, and hateth his brother, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." "Beloved, if God hath so loved us,

we ought also to love one another." " Let no man deceive you : he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

Here are infallible tests, by which we can know, for a certainty, whether we are Christians or not. If we trust to any others, we may be deceived ; if we trust to these, we may be assured that we are right. He that fancies himself a Christian, and yet does not righteousness, is entirely deceived. Equally great is the deception of those who say they love God, while they hate their brethren.

It is vain, then, for people to talk of their piety, while the spirit of censoriousness rankles in their hearts ; while they have no affection but for those of their own communion, and while they refuse the hand of Christian fellowship to all of a different creed. It is vain to talk of their piety, while wanting in justice, kindness, and integrity ; for what doth the Lord require, but to deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly ? It is vain to profess religion, when they can join in the work of slander against their neighbors, and steal from them their good name. It is vain to talk of their devotion, when destitute of that charity which listens to the cry of distress, which watches at the door of poverty, and which imparts food and raiment to suffering humanity.

If we look at the characteristics of revival religion, we shall find it entirely different from the religion of the New Testament. Allow me, gen-

lemen, to call your attention to some of these differences.

1. Revival religion is wanting in permanency. It is the production of excitement. No person can remain highly excited for any considerable length of time. Extraordinary means cannot long be continued ; and, even if they could, such is the nature of man, that he would soon cease to be affected by them, and his feelings would at length fall as much below their natural temperament as they had been elevated above it. Hence, the short duration of revivals ; and hence, the season of extraordinary coldness and deadness by which they are followed.

But, while revival religion is thus evanescent, true religion is permanent. It is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast ; it is a treasure which neither moth nor rust can corrupt ; it is a light which shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. What a wide difference ! "The former is like the gourd of Jonah, which grew up in a night, and perished in a night ; while the latter is like the noble oak of the forest, whose roots strike deeper and deeper, year after year, and which stands alike in storm and sunshine."

2. Revival religion is different, in its practical effects, from the religion of Christ. We have seen the censoriousness, the want of candor, the sectarian bitterness, and the gloom, austerity, and sadness of many revival converts. If we add to these their fanaticism, we shall have a very full idea of revival religion.

Fanaticism is a destructive evil. It takes away

reason, and "shuts the eyes of the understanding." A fanatic is, to a certain extent, a madman.. He falsely imagines himself to be under the special influence of God's Spirit, and believes this Spirit has revealed to him what is truth. He therefore says it is impossible that he should be wrong, and speaks with as much confidence as the Saviour himself. He denounces, as though clothed with divine authority, and imagines that the Holy Ghost enables him to tell who are heirs of wo, and who heirs of heaven !

No good, then, can possibly result from fanaticism. It is altogether evil in its effects. It makes none acquainted with God ; it gives to the heart no good principle of action ; it opens no fountain of sympathy ; it hears none of the complaints of the widow and orphan ; it is no day-star of peace and hope ; it exerts no control over the ordinary affairs of life ; it leads no weary wanderer to the foot of the cross. It may make a man abstain from intemperance and Sabbath breaking ; but it will clothe him with evils equally as great. It may cause him to pray in agony, but the prayer it prompts is the prayer of a heart over which good judgment has ceased to preside.

Such is revival religion. How different from the religion of Christ! That can fire the heart with love, inspire it with devotion, make the minister eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, and exert a benign influence in every department of society. For the healthy and vigorous, it has rules of action ; for the thoughtless and vile, lessons of

duty and warnings of danger ; for the sick and afflicted, a healing balm ; for the poor and needy, an exhaustless charity ; and, for the dying, a sustaining and steadfast hope.

"True religion  
Is always mild, propitious, and humane ;  
Plays not the tyrant, plants no faith in blood—  
But stoops to polish, succor, and redress,  
And builds her grandeur on the public good."

3. Revival religion differs from that of the New Testament, in the manner of its connection with the soul. During a revival, we hear a great deal said about *getting* religion. One man *got religion* last night ; five women *got religion* in one day ; four children got religion at our meeting, &c. &c. Got religion !! What is the meaning of such language ? A man went to a store and got a hat, or cloth for a cloak. This we can understand, for these are tangible things. But is religion a material substance, which can be taken up and handled ? This will not be pretended.

A writer, who styles himself an English traveller, thus happily exposes the fallacy of the idea that we can get religion in a moment. He says,—

"In this, there is something very closely allied to the old pagan philosophy, that religion is some divine afflatus breathed into the mind ; having nothing in common with it ; existing independently and alone ; not incorporated in the mind, and dwelling in the most intimate friendship with it, but maintained within it as an abstract principle or ethereal essence by a preternatural influence, or,

to use the language of the philosophy, by influxes from the fountain of light."

If this idea be correct, it is perfectly proper to say, such a man got religion at such a meeting ; for religion is something which can be poured into the soul, just as fluid can be poured from one vessel to another. I am strongly inclined to think this is the idea which many attach to getting religion ; and when they say their souls are filled, they mean, that there have been real influxes from the Parent Spirit. I do not suppose, gentlemen, that you entertain any such opinion ; but such is, unquestionably, the idea of many..

The writer to which I have just referred, says,—

"A curious instance occurred to me a few days ago. I sent my servant to a tailor to ask why a coat, I had ordered, was not brought to me ; and the answer was, that 'the principal workman had got religion that morning, and could not finish it.'"

Now, he thought religion was something separate from goodness, honesty, truth, or he would not have left his employer on its account. "I could not help reflecting upon it," says the Traveller. "Just compare religion with other things. Certainly, it is an acquisition as difficult as any other, —as difficult as any habit or attainment of the intellect, for instance. Now what would be thought of it, if it were gravely stated that a man had got knowledge, or intelligence, or a philosophic habit of mind, on a certain morning ? Comparisons like these test at once the fallacy and absurdity of these notions.

But, comparisons aside, look at the thing itself. Call religion by any other name ; let it no longer be this mystical peculiarity, but a broad and rational principle — call it, for instance, goodness, or virtue, or devotion—and how impossible would it be to talk of getting devotion, or virtue, or goodness, on a given day or hour ! Or, take religion to pieces,— resolve this complex thing into its parts, and who could talk of getting benevolence, or patience, or humility, on a certain morning — much more of getting them all together ? ”

Now, that religion is goodness, is undeniably taught on every page of the Bible. Hear the Saviour, — “ Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn ; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek ; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness ; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful ; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers ; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” (*Matt. v. 3—11.*) Again he says, — “ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (*v. 16.*) And again, — “ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neigh-

bor, and hate thine enemy ; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? do not even the publicans so ? ” (v. 43—47.) St. Paul teaches the same. He says, — “ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (*Phil. iv. 8.*) Thus religion is goodness ; it is all the virtues required of us in the Bible. It is faith, hope, and charity ; it is patience, submission, and forgiveness ; it is candor, truth, and honesty.

According to these views, getting religion is not the work of a moment. The Saviour represents the growth of religion by the growth of plants. “ First, the blade, then the ear, after that the full grown corn in the ear.” He also likens it to leaven, which continues gradually to operate, till it leavens the whole lump, or till the whole soul is moulded into the divine image. It is as improper, then, to speak of getting religion on a particular occasion,

as it would be to speak of getting a knowledge of any science, or of the languages, or of any mechanical business. Religion is goodness and virtue ; it is devotion and love. Now could we believe a man serious, if we should hear him talk about getting these instantaneously, or of these existing within him, aside from the general state of the affections and the understanding ?

Perhaps, gentlemen, you will remind me of the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost ; and tell me that, if, under the preaching of Peter, sinners could be converted in a day, they may under the preaching of Elder Knapp. You could call my attention to no better case ; for how could three thousand, in a few hours, go through with all the horror which seizes your converts ; be awakened, convicted, and converted ; each relate an experience, besides being baptized ? You will recollect that they were converted, baptized, and added to the church in one day ! It is very certain, then, that the mode of operation at that time bore no resemblance to your mode. The conversion of these persons was wholly unlike your conversions. The gift of tongues convinced the people that God was indeed with the apostles. The discourse of Peter related not to the anger of God and the torture of hell, but to the Messiahship of the Saviour, and to the wickedness of the Jews in crucifying him. " Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do ? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be

baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this unoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (*Acts* ii. 37—41.) How unlike the account of conversions which take place in a revival meeting! The change experienced by the three thousand was merely giving up Judaism, and embracing Christ. Their repentance was a change of principles in regard to the mission of Jesus. Their remission of sins was simply a "recovery from that sinful state to which all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, are represented as being reduced, so long as they are out of the Christian covenant." We see nothing miraculous, then, in their change; neither do we see any transformation of their natures. It is true, the Holy Ghost was conferred upon them; but as that was a gift of miraculous power, you would not adduce it as proof that it is given to the converts of Elder Knapp. If you would, then I must ask for the performance of a miracle, that I may have a demonstration of the possession of this gift. You will please to remember that the Holy Ghost was given after the conversion, and, therefore, was not its cause, as you teach. You will

remember, also, that it was given on condition of repentance.

But, if you desire any further proof, look at the other terms employed to express the formation of the Christian character. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.” (*2 Cor. iv. 3—6.*) “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” (*2 Cor. v. 18, 19.*) “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (*Phil. ii. 9—11.*) “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” (*1 Cor. xv. 28.*) I ask, gen-

tlemen, that you will ponder upon these expressions. Look at them: "Hath shined into our hearts"—"reconciled us to himself"—"every knee should bow," and "every tongue should confess"—"all things shall be subdued." How clearly do these show the nature of the change experienced in becoming Christians! The sinner is enlightened, reconciled, humbled, subdued.

Thus, there is nothing whatever to justify the opinion, that religion is something which drops down from the skies, which is poured into the soul, and which can exist there independently and alone. A greater absurdity could not be adopted. Religion is the right exercise of the mind, and the proper government of the heart. It is gratitude and love, justice and mercy. To become a Christian, is to have the mind enlightened, the heart purified, and the affections elevated. Three things make a Christian: First, faith in the Bible as a revelation from God; second, love to God and man; and, third, a life of uprightness and purity. Therefore, the way to make Christians is to enlighten the understanding, and cause people to see the truth, feel its power, and exhibit its fruits. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (*James i. 26, 27.*)

Getting religion! There is something inex-

pressibly ludicrous in the popular opinion on this subject. Look at those under concern upon the anxious bench. Some are groaning, some sobbing, and some crying for mercy. They are expecting some outpouring of the Spirit, which will give them light and comfort. Other revival operators have a different process. Hence, in some places they get religion by rolling upon the floor; in others, by jumping; in others, by jerking. Now, why rolling, jumping, or jerking, should bring down the Spirit, I am unable to see.

Gentlemen, this is fanaticism. The Holy Spirit has no more to do with such scenes than it has with the dancing of the Shakers, or had with the gibberish of the French prophets and the Irvingites. I say the same of your revival. The marvellous outpourings of the Spirit were merely the workings of the imagination. The converts were deluded. Religion has no separate, independent existence in the mind, but has the same connection with it that music, philosophy, or any mechanic art has.

I am, &c.

## LETTER XI.

**CONTENTS.**— Conclusiveness of the Proof advanced — Jerkers — Laughers — Jumpers — Rollers — Osgoodites — Mormonites — What these Fanatics would say to Messrs. Stow, Neale, and Cushman — Their Answer to the Fanatics — Nervous System — Imagination — Its Effects upon the Body — A Wonder-worker in curing Diseases — Facts — Dr. Rush on Illusions — Scott on the same — Action which the Mind and Nervous System have on each other — This Action accounts for the Effects witnessed in Revivals — These Effects all of the same Class — New Lebanon Convention of Revivalists — The Propriety of holding another — Agreement among Revivalists demanded before they condemn any for not acknowledging Revivals the Work of God — Philosophy of Revival Conversions — Three Results — The Joy of Converts — Converts generally fall away — Reason why some become Maniacs — Reason why others turn against Revivalists.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,**— In the preceding letters, I have given numerous reasons for believing that modern revivals are the work of men. These reasons are, to me, of the most satisfactory character, and appear sufficient to convince all who are not wilfully blind. And yet, gentlemen, I would not accuse you of any such blindness. You may think revivals are too astonishing for human means. Before however, you settle down upon this conclusion, it may be well to look at some of the influences of the imagination and of the nervous system. Turn your attention a moment to Kentucky, and see the fanaticism of the *jerkers*. These people were seized with fits of jerking during divine worship. Not only would two or three

be affected at a time, but a whole congregation. It was a strange sight to behold! Grave old men and women, with others of every age, down even to childhood, were in a state of uncontrollable convulsion. It mattered not with whom the twitching commenced, the consequence was the same; it would, in a few minutes, become general.

Again, look at the *laughers*. A gentleman once gave me an account of some fanatics who had fits of laughter during divine worship. He said, when they came on, those subject to them appeared to have no control over themselves. They would break out in any stage of the worship, and shake their sides equal to a company sporting over a wine-cup. It was probably something like the fit of laughter which the two Westleys had when walking in the field.

Again, look at the *jumpers*. I have often, at the South, witnessed their movements. Sometimes, to render the work easy, the person puts his hand upon two pews, and in that posture continues to jump for half an hour, save an occasional interruption to obtain breath. If he becomes exhausted before *he gets religion*, others go to his assistance, and aid him in his movements. I have seen several jumping at a time in this way. The jumpers are objects of particular solicitude, and it is expected every moment that they will find relief in the outpourings of the Spirit. I believe however, that the jumping is not confined to the *anxious*, but that it sometimes extends to those seeking sanctification.

Again, look at the *rollers*. These are known in various parts of Vermont and New Hampshire. You have, no doubt, gentlemen, often heard of their movements: men and women throw themselves upon the floor, and roll about, and groan, and scream, in a most disgusting and ludicrous manner.

Again, look at the Osgoodites. The parent society is at Warner, N. H. They have public confession meetings, such as your leader established; and they make some curious confessions. Their experiences are very wonderful, and exhibit a strange mixture of things human and divine. But their dancing is the greatest curiosity to visitors. At the time I visited them, it commenced while they were singing a very lively air, and such as would affect those who are not accustomed to do all their dancing to the Lord. The first movement was a regular beating of time with the feet and hands. Soon one of the leaders rose, and beat the time standing. It was not long, however, before he commenced dancing. He was immediately joined by others, and in a short time nearly the whole congregation was on the floor. Not only the young and healthy, but the old and lame, engaged in the service. They called it the work of the Spirit.

Again, look at the Mormonites. They have a new revelation, and their preachers pretend to be inspired of God. You may, perhaps, tell me that they are deceivers, and know that their inspiration is a pretence. But I have an equal right to say

the same of revivalists. The Mormonites, save the leaders, are no doubt as sincere as any class of Christians. That they are deluded fanatics, I admit; but, in that respect, they differ not from thousands connected with sects more numerous and influential.

Again, the scenes often witnessed at camp-meetings are of the most remarkable character. Persons are so affected as to lose all control over themselves, and fall senseless to the ground. Sometimes their "jaws are closed, their eyes rolled back in their sockets, the extremities of the body cold, and the whole visage presents a ghastly, death-like appearance." Others foam and froth at the mouth, like persons in a fit. Others weep, shout, and sing. Scenes like these are very common at camp-meetings, and sometimes are witnessed in ordinary protracted meetings.

Now, gentlemen, you will agree with me in saying the Holy Spirit has no agency whatever in any of these scenes; and that the jerking, laughing, jumping, rolling, dancing, prophesying, and convulsions, to which we have referred, are wholly the fruits of fanaticism. On this point, you have no doubt. But how can fanaticism produce such effects? This is an important question, and deserves particular consideration. How can fanaticism control the body, and} prostrate its strength? All those to whom we have referred are certain that what they experience is the work of the Spirit, and would denounce you, were you to question it, in the same manner that Universalists and

Unitarians were denounced during your stir. They are certain that what they feel is supernatural. Doubt it, and they will tell you that they *know*, and that they have a witness in themselves which cannot lie.

And the leaders will say, — “ Why, look at those persons. They have reformed ; they go not in the path of ruin, as formerly ; they are prayerful and devout ; they are born again.” And they will ask, with an air of confidence and triumph, which bids defiance to opposition, — “ What but God himself could thus stir, change, and prostrate the people ?” I know, gentlemen, perfectly well, how you would dispose of such cases. You would refer them to the influence of the imagination. You would describe the nervous system, and tell how an irritation and excitement of that will produce “ love, anger, hatred, revenge, friendship, weeping, mourning, laughter, joy, grief, gloom, despair, and, in short, all of the different characters, passions, dispositions, &c. that we see presented among mankind.” You would also describe the imagination, and show that it is that “ eccentric, elastic flight of the mind, which ceases to reason upon real objects, or upon reasonable hypothesis, but loses itself in painful and pleasing dreams, in unreal forms, and awful contemplations ; and it conceives all of those unreal phantoms to be awful realities, which so excites the nerves, that our common sense is, in many instances, actually overcome ; and this produces insanity.” — *H. F. Stearns.*

You would illustrate the influence of the imagi-

nation upon the nervous system, by the wonderful effects which those produce who profess to work miracles. You would refer to the Catholic Church, and speak of the astonishing results which are very frequently witnessed by their pretended miracles. You would refer to the Salem witchcraft, and show that it was the effect of a diseased state of the imagination. You would appeal to those men who profess to have great power in curing diseases, and tell me that they can actually make a man think he is cured, when really he is not benefited in the least.

This would be your course. By such facts would you show that all the results to which we have referred, among religious fanatics, are to be attributed to the effects of the imagination. In doing this, you would have the sanction of the best authority. Upham, in his work on Witchcraft, justly ascribes to the imagination an almost omnipotent power. All writers, who have treated upon the imagination, have taken the same view of its influence. Dissertations on this subject are full of facts. Strong men have dropped dead from an excitement of the imagination. The reception of bad news has caused instant death. When Copernicus published his system of astronomy, the appearance of the work produced such an excitement as to cause immediate death. Persons have often been thrown into nervous fevers by terrific preachers, or the alarm produced by some great catastrophe.

But it is not enough, in considering this subject, to look at the influence of the imagination on the

nervous system. We must look at the action of the body on the mind. Not only does the mind act upon the body, but the body acts upon the mind. It is a settled fact in physiology, that a trifling physical derangement may produce such an effect as to fill the mind with great illusions. Dr. Rush, in his work on the diseases of the mind, treats very fully on this subject; and explains the cause of the false perceptions that take place in the ears and eyes, by which we hear voices and see objects that do not exist. Scott, in his Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, gives many very remarkable instances of illusions. One was the case of a learned bookseller, whose apartments were filled with crowds of persons, who moved and acted before him, and even spoke to him. Another was the case of a man who saw his bolted door fly open, an old hag enter, and strike him a severe blow with her staff. This affected him so greatly, that he would fall from his chair in a swoon. Another was the case of a man who saw daily, and often when in company, a personage arrayed in a court dress, with bag and sword, tamboured waist-coat, and chapeau, that would rapidly glide by him, and ascend the stairs before him, as if to announce him in the drawing-room. Many of the persons to whom Scott refers were men of science, and knew that what they saw was an illusion. All their reasoning, however, could not prevent the illusions. These cases show why persons sometimes see ghosts, and have what are called warnings.

In these cases we have illustrated the intimate connection between mind and body, and the great action they have upon each other. Any nervous affection, therefore,—or, as your "Christian Review" says,—any "animal excitement," may affect the mind; may depress it, or elate it; may fill it with rapture, or overwhelm it with gloom; may cause it to see visions and commune with the dead; may make it resplendent with light, or envelope it in darkness.

Here let us pause, and consider with care the conclusion to which we have come, and we shall be able to account for all the effects witnessed in your revivals, without supposing God has any special agency in them whatever, or that the converts are in any degree dishonest. In regard to the jerking, laughing, jumping, &c., we are perfectly agreed in saying that they are the effect of mental and animal excitement.

But, gentlemen, these persons see visions. Look at those who fall senseless upon the ground. While in that state they converse with God and Christ; they visit heaven and hell. They, too, can tell the very moment when they were converted, and can give an experience that far exceeds any related by your converts. I have heard of one, who not only saw the Saviour, but declared that he came and sat with her. I have heard of another, who saw the devil, and so perfectly that he was able to give a very minute account of him. Many have seen hell and heaven. Indeed, this is very common. It is, I believe no more than your con-

verts were able to do! That they should see hell, is not a matter of much surprise, when the preaching to which they listened is considered; but it is more difficult to account for their having seen heaven.

I ask, now, why all that was witnessed at your revival cannot be attributed to mental and animal excitement,—to the power of the imagination, and the influence of the nervous system? You cannot say the effects are too great to have been the production of such causes; for you have before you effects far greater, which you attribute wholly to mental and animal excitement. What you call fanaticism as much exceeds your revival as yours exceeds one which I would approve. Look, gentlemen, at this with candor. When I say your revival was the work of man, you start back, and, with a kind of horror, exclaim, *impossible! impossible!* and, with an air of confidence, point me to the conversions produced, to the deep emotions felt, and the marvellous experiences which some had. But all this avails nothing; for I can point you to effects which are infinitely greater and more wonderful, but which you will acknowledge were wholly produced by man. It is of no avail, therefore, to tell about the conviction and conversion of people; the clearness with which they saw the truth of your doctrines and the falsity of liberal sentiments, for the same things are witnessed among the jerkers, laughers, rollers, jumpers, and dancers; neither is it of any avail to say Mr. Knapp's converts can tell the moment when they

were changed and the Holy Spirit was poured upon them, for the worst fanatics can tell the same. Are you not, gentlemen, highly inconsistent in saying Mr. Knapp's revival was the work of God — for only he could produce such effects — when you ascribe effects far greater to men?

There is another fact to which I must call your attention. *The effects which you say are produced by human means are of the same class with those which you attribute to the Spirit of God.* There is not a scientific medical man in the world but what will assent to this. Sometimes an excitement of the nervous system produces crying and sobbing; sometimes laughing and leaping, and sometimes an entire prostration of strength. In your revival, we saw only the former of these nervous manifestations. But they are all of the same class, and can be traced to one cause. The same rule will apply to the operations of the mind. When greatly excited, and under the dominion of the nervous system, it can see visions, behold the regions of the lost, visit heaven and hell, feel its sins instantly taken away, and tell the moment when it was supernaturally changed. These operations and impressions all belong to the same class, and it is impossible to divide them. If it be not, tell me where to draw the line, and how you can decide where it should be drawn. As I wish for something authentic, why would it not be well to have a convention of revivalists, and let the matter be made plain. Do not be discouraged by the New Lebanon convention, held eight or ten years

ago for a similar purpose, whose session was spent in debates that would disgrace a club of atheists; but come together, exchange views freely, tell the world what is human and what divine in religious stirs, — and I will concur in whatever shall be *unanimously* adopted. I certainly have a right to demand that you shall be *perfectly* unanimous; for *Holy Ghost preachers*, preachers whose converts are specially taught by God's Spirit that *Unitarianism and Universalism* are false, ought to agree on matters of this kind.

I will ask, gentlemen, one trifling favor. It is this,—that the work of denouncing and dooming liberal Christians to hell may be suspended, till you shall have given such a decision, and told the world distinctly what is human and what divine in revivals. You cannot call this request unreasonable; for, while revivalists are denouncing each other as fanatics, and attributing each other's revivals to human measures, we ought not to be condemned for calling them all the fruits of fanaticism.

As some revivalists may take a broader ground than you are disposed to do, and call every thing which bears the name of a revival the work of God, it may be well to explain more distinctly than I have done, how the imagination and nervous system can produce effects so astonishing as are witnessed in most revivals. For the benefit of such I will offer a few reflections on the philosophy of revival conversions.

All will allow that a high intellectual or ner-

vous excitement, like that produced in a revival meeting, cannot be continued for any great length of time. A reaction will shortly take place ; and when it occurs, one of the following results will be witnessed. First, those laboring under the excitement obtain a hope ; or, second, they settle down into a state of deep gloom or despair ; or, third, they return again to their former habits and views.

When a hope is obtained, the convert often feels for a few days great joy. Occasionally this joy lasts for weeks. The joy comes in the most natural manner imaginable. While under concern, the sinner feels as though he is in danger every moment of dropping into hell, and he is terrified almost to distraction. He is told that if he will pray and agonize, and promise to be faithful, God will pour out his Spirit, and place his feet upon the rock of safety. When the excitement begins to abate, the load upon his heart lightens, and he begins to find ease. This, his excited imagination pronounces the commencement of the great change which he has been seeking, and he regards the comforting emotions felt as the work of God. Presently his fears wholly subside, God's wrath is turned away, heaven is open before him, and he *hopes*. When the nervous system is greatly excited, sinners actually fancy that they can see hell, and the devil, and God, and Christ. Thousands have declared that they saw all these, and I am not prepared to pronounce them liars. Now, to escape from such impending dangers, and feel that you are made an heir of heaven, must produce sensations of ex-

quisite joy. We wonder not that converts feel a thrill of rapture.

This rapture, however, is of short duration ; and, when it begins to subside, many imagine that they have grieved away the Holy Spirit, and they become either very gloomy or raving maniacs. Others, when the rapture is over, begin to reflect upon what they have passed through, and to examine the real state of their hearts ; and, finding nothing to justify the extravagant notions entertained about a change of nature, they conclude that the whole is priestcraft, and they return to the world. This is the fate of a great majority of revival converts. Out of three hundred converted by Burchard in Woodstock, Vt., only about eight remained firm over three years ! Out of thirty young men converted in a revival at the Warren Academy, not over two continued in the faith. Mr. Knapp's converts are but little, if any, better. Hundreds of those he has converted in other places, are now among the greatest enemies of religion.

But all under concern do not always escape from their fright by obtaining a hope. After having been in a state of great terror for two or three weeks, and wept, and groaned, and prayed for this long period, they begin to imagine, because the expected relief is not found, that they are reprobates, or that they have sinned away the day of grace, and they sink into a state of melancholy or despair. Being differently constituted from others, imagination cannot do so much for them as for those we have described, and therefore the abatement of the excite-

ment felt is not construed into the dawning of light. The consequence is fatal. They are, for a long time, either the victims of a deep melancholy or raving despair!

The third class, when their terror begins to subside, begin to reason, and to see the deception that has been practised upon them ; and, in a short time, they ridicule, in the boldest manner, not only the excitement, but the men by whom it has been created.

Such, gentlemen, is the philosophy of revival conversions, and such are the reasons why all do not obtain a hope, and why so few who go to the anxious bench adhere to the faith.

I am, &c.

## LETTER XII.

**CONTENTS.** — Impossible to promote true Religion by Deception — Quackery — Deception brings the Ministry into contempt — Dr. Sharp's Sermon at the Ordination of Mr. Cushman — The course of Dr. Sharp and Mr. Hague — Evils of Morbid Excitements — Divisions in Families — Revival Converts like the bigoted and exclusive Pharisees — Insanity — Arrogance of Revivalists — Conclusion.

**REV. GENTLEMEN,** — It is extremely painful to contemplate the effects of modern revivals; but I should be false to the cause of Christ, did I not fully describe them. You are aware that they are in many respects bad; but you think the good done overbalances the evil. This, however, is a strange conclusion; for how can a religion of love, honesty, justice, and candor, be promoted by trickery, abuse, misrepresentation, and evil fabrications? That all these were employed by Elder Knapp, you will not deny; and will you pretend that good can result from such means? If it can, why may not deception be used to advance any good object? Why may it not be used in the cause of temperance? Why condemn its use among politicians? Why may it not be employed in the management of children? And why may not God himself employ it in the accomplishment of his purposes? It will be of no avail to say wicked men have been reclaimed. Astonishing cures are occasionally effected by quacks; but do those cures justify quackery and its gross impositions, and com-

pensate for the hundreds which it annually sacrifices? That we may form a just estimate of the effects produced by revivals, let us consider, —

1. Their tendency to destroy confidence in the ministry. The success of the gospel depends in a great degree upon the character of those engaged in its defence. If they are fair, candid, and honest men, the gospel will be respected; but if trickish, dishonest, and abusive, it will be brought into contempt. This topic was very ably and fully discussed by Dr. Sharp, in the excellent sermon he delivered at the ordination of one of you, on the text, — *Let no man despise thee.* He drew a faithful picture of the religious buffoon and mountebank, and condemned in unqualified terms the use of every species of deception and dishonesty; and showed that they would certainly make the minister and his religion despised. A sad illustration have we of this in the effects produced by your stir. Hundreds have been led by it to despise and ridicule all clergymen; and, had it not been for the judicious opposition of liberal Christians, and the course pursued by your brothers Sharp and Hague, and the principal Orthodox clergymen of the city, thousands of our best people would now hold the ministry in utter contempt, and denounce all preachers as spiritual jugglers and knaves.

2. Revivals render ineffectual the ordinary means of grace. Those employed in getting them up distinctly teach that the time to obtain religion is when God is passing by, and that those not converted then will all be damned. This was the

daily talk during your revival. Thus the ordinary means of forming the Christian character were set aside, and a fanatical excitement pronounced essential to the conversion of a sinner. A crazy zeal was the order of the day, and all who would not ride upon the storm that had been raised, were assailed as enemies of God. Not a calm, dispassionate person could be found among all the actors; every one was wild with excitement. Now that such an excitement is a curse to religion, is unquestionable. It does not increase religious knowledge or honesty; it does not wake up the better feelings of the heart. Its whole influence is bad. It inflames the passions, blinds the reason, makes bitter partisans, and poisons the heart. It renders those who style themselves the Christians among the most unreasonable, headstrong, and inconsistent persons of the world; and causes the sober and reflecting part of community to turn from them with disgust, and to say, emphatically, if religion produces such excitements and renders people thus fanatical, it is a curse; and the sooner it is driven from the earth the better. And why is not their conclusion just? Can that be a blessing which produces disorder and confusion in society; which interrupts, for weeks in succession, the regular business of life; which deranges the imagination, and excites to the highest degree the whole nervous system; which takes men and women from their duties, and makes them follow, night and day, an itinerant狂人; which makes them surrender reason, and yield wholly to the

guidance of passion? No, gentlemen, it is a curse, a grievous curse.

3. Revivals destroy the union and happiness of families; they set the wife against the husband, and the daughter against the mother. You will no doubt exultingly say the preaching of Jesus did this. I grant that it did; but it was in a very different sense from what your preaching does it. This result is the direct effect of revivals, but it was the indirect effect of Christ's labors. The truth is, revival converts have the very spirit of the bigoted, exclusive, and self-righteous Pharisees; and, like them, refuse to others the privilege of judging for themselves. And here is the reason of the family divisions and contentions which you produce. Your converts will give no peace to those who differ from them; they are sour in their temper, and assail with pharisaical self-righteousness and bitterness all of a different creed. Thus your converts are the aggressors and persecutors, just as were the enemies of the primitive Christians. It is therefore one of the greatest calamities that can fall upon a family, to have one of its members infatuated by a revivalist. The peace of that family is destroyed; and, unless all the members will yield their rights and opinions to the infatuated one, they must expect to be constantly assailed and reproached. Revival religion has a peculiar power to poison the soul, freeze up the fountain of social feeling, and render those once amiable, kind, obliging, gentle, and candid, sour, morose, unsocial, uncandid, and illiberal. This,

then, is the way revivals destroy the peace of families.

4. Revivals produce insanity. I am aware, gentlemen, that this is a subject on which you feel particularly sensitive. The large number of persons carried to the asylums for the insane, since your operations commenced, no doubt is a source of constant uneasiness. Probably you have a thousand times asked the question,—Can it be that true religion produces such results? And, if it does, why were none made insane by the preaching of Jesus and the apostles? But I am amazed that these questions have not made you pause. Why, think a moment. Christianity making people insane! Visit any place where there has been a revival, and you will hear of several whose reason has been entirely dethroned! About eight years ago, a pamphlet was published, containing an account of one hundred who had been maddened in this manner! It would be easy, now, to collect a thousand! Look at the reports sent out from the asylums for the insane, and you will find that something like one sixth are made crazy by gloomy views of religion and terrific preaching! Whitefield drove fifteen people mad by one sermon? It will not do to say it is the *want* of religion, not religion, that makes people crazy, for often the very best Christians are thus ruined. Neither will it do to say the conversion of many compensates for the maddening of a few; for Jesus and the apostles maddened none. Insanity, despair, suicide! these,

gentlemen, are never produced by preaching the truth !

5. Revivals make people blasphemously arrogant. Take one instance in illustration of this. On one occasion, your leader declared that he could convert any Universalist of this city, and dared the stoutest one to come forward for prayers, saying, if he was not converted, God would strike him dead in an instant ! This was horrid, and the man guilty of it, should have been treated as a bold blasphemer, and silenced as a preacher. It was a miserable trick to fill the people with terror, and make them look up to him as a great wonder-worker. The power of the fanatic was put to the test, and his folly and arrogance exposed to the congregation. A Universalist went forward, but he was neither *converted* nor *struck dead*.

Such, gentlemen, are some of the evils of modern revivals, and, in view of these evils, can you say there is a preponderance of good in the effects which revivals produce ? If they are the work of God, would there be any of these evils attending them ?

But I must close. I have spoken to you freely and fully against modern revivals, and presented the reasons why I am so decidedly opposed to them. I have endeavored to write in the spirit of candor and love, and feel assured that, though you may deny my conclusions, you will acknowledge that I am actuated by a desire to do good.

I am, &c.

2



BV3788.98

Letters to Rev. B. Stow, R. H. Neal  
Andover-Harvard

000000000



3 2044 077 904 175

